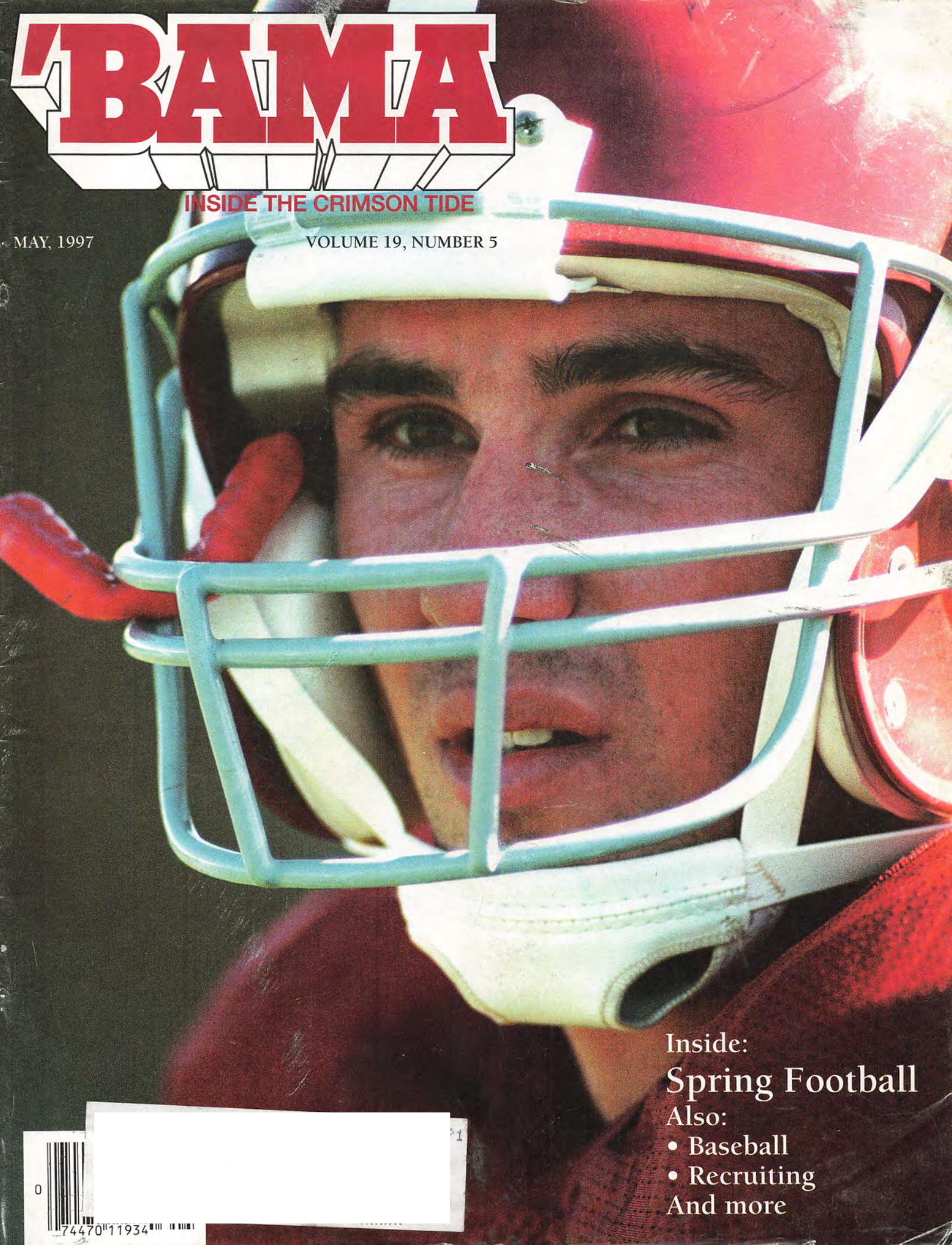


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MAY, 1997

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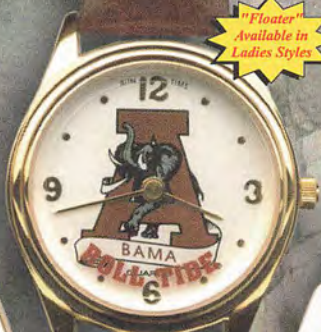


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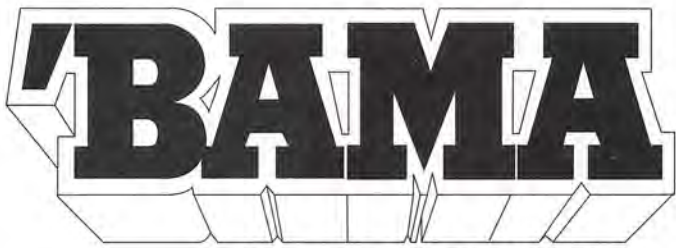
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On the cover: Warren Foust was the back-up quarterback in 1996 and was listed number two on the depth chart this spring, but Tide Head Coach Mike DuBose believes it will be better for Foust and better for Bama if he will play safety. That's one of several notable position moves of spring training. See Page 16.

Barry Fikes Photo



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Spring Training: Football Team Makes Progress

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Although all goals were not met, Alabama is a better football team now than before the 15 days of spring practice. Nevertheless, progress will have to continue in August if Bama is to be among nation's top teams. **by Kirk McNair**

A-Day Wrap-Up: This Was Nothing Like A Game

10

As usual, the spring game bore no resemblance to a real game. Oddly, this year's A-Day Game didn't bear much resemblance to the other spring practices, except that kicking was poor. **by Kirk McNair**

Terry Jones: One Of The Strengths Of Tide Football

12

One of the most pleasing aspects of Alabama's football team as far as Head Coach Mike DuBose is concerned is the improvement in strength. Former Tide star Terry Jones was elevated to head coach for strength and conditioning following the appointment of DuBose. **by Kirk McNair**

Heath Panks: It's Been A Long, Winding Road

14

The same year that Alabama won its last national championship in football, 1992, Heath Panks was one of the nation's top high school football players. His career has taken several different routes since then, and he'll finish his college career this fall. **by Donald F. Staffo**

Spring Experiments: For Some, Springtime Time To Make Move

16

Spring training is a time for experimentation, and that includes looking at players at new positions. Three of the more notable position moves involved Warren Foust, Travis Smith and Griff Redmill. **by Jeff Janes**

Roberto Vaz: Trying To Help Tide To World Series

20

Baseball star Roberto Vaz can do it all. He hits for power and average, runs the bases well, and plays both outfield and first base. Additionally, he's been an excellent relief pitcher. **by John Barnes**

Spring Signings Men's Basketball Adds More

24

Although all Bama teams seemed to add strength in the early signing period last November, more talented performers have come on board in the spring signing period. Men's basketball has had particularly good success, and it's not necessarily over yet. **by Kirk McNair**

Senior Golfers: Talented Group Nears The End

26

Although Golf Coach Dick Spybey has sometimes felt as if he was on a roller coaster, he has enjoyed the play of a talented group of senior players. **by Donna Fromme**

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Football Team Makes Progress

by Kirk McNair

DuBose sees most goals at least partially met

The goals set by Head Football Coach Mike DuBose before Alabama spring training got under way were not entirely met. Had they been, it would probably have meant that the goals were too modest.

DuBose said that Bama had not been able to achieve its goal of being solid two deep at every position. "We'll either have to have some help from incoming freshmen or we'll

have to have people who are coming back make a lot of improvement in the off season," he said. Although he didn't limit the number of positions where he is concerned about depth, he said that he couldn't name a back-up defensive end "unless Terry Jones can put 20 or 30 pounds on (walk-on) Kevin Flowers. And I don't know if we've even got a first team (offensive) right tackle, and I know we don't have a second."

He said depth at tight end would be a problem if Rod Rutledge does not return full speed from a knee injury he suffered in the first week of spring training. Rutledge was the only casualty of the spring, and he is expected to be full speed by fall. Three others were held out of spring training entirely, but all are expected back in August. They are offensive linemen Will Friend and Brenon Meadows, both of whom started in 1996, and defensive back Thomas Hill.

DuBose said he was satisfied that the coaches have identified the roles of the players, that the coaches have a grasp of what each player does best and so the coaches will be able to put the players in situations where they can perform at their best.

He said he had hoped to put in all of the fall plan for offense, defense and kicking game, but that the offensive plan is only 75-80 per cent in because of getting bogged down midway through practice, and the kicking game doesn't have every situation covered because some who will be a part of special teams are not yet in (meaning incoming freshmen). Most of the defense was installed in the spring.

And, DuBose said, he is satisfied that the team developed the oneness he seeks, "everyone playing and coaching as one. This is a close group."

The other goal of the spring was to continue the progress in the overall strength of the team. DuBose said that he is pleased with the strength program under Terry Jones, but that there's no time for let up. "They are going to start back in the weight room Monday," DuBose said after the A-Day Game. Additionally, most of the players will be in Tuscaloosa for much of the summer as the off-season conditioning program is a point of emphasis this year.

The head coach estimates as many as 15-18 true freshmen may get the chance to play next fall. "They are going to have to play to get experience," he said. "I don't believe in recruiting with the idea of redshirting."

Overall, DuBose said, "It has been a good spring." At the conclusion of spring drills he said he told the players he wished the team had 15 more days to practice "because I think we're at the point we're starting to make progress."

Generally, DuBose was concerned about defensive intensity through much of the



Dennis Riddle had an excellent spring, holding off the Alexanders, Curtis and Shaun, to remain number one at the key Bama running back position. Riddle also got some work at fullback in Alabama's new split back offensive look.

Robert Sutton Photo

spring, although he thought it was better in the final few practices. He thought the offensive line showed improvement and strong play, but he worried that it was not as good late in the spring. And he saw good and back in the kicking game, the good the work of punter Daniel Pope, the bad the place-kicking.

"Offensively, we've done a good job," he said. "Defensively, we made some progress. I don't think going into spring practice I realized we were as thin defensively as we are." He said the depth chart on special teams will be "wide open" when fall work begins in August.

As might be expected, the offensive skill positions are in reasonably good shape. At the position of most attention, quarterback, there are surprises. It is something of a surprise that no one made a move on senior Freddie Kitchens, even though Kitchens has been the starter in Bama's last 14 games. Indeed, Kitchens distanced himself from the competition. One of those competitors, Warren Foust, has been moved to a better position for him, safety. Senior Lance Tucker finished the spring as the number two quarterback, with John David Phillips, who suffers a bit from a mechanical style, third. DuBose said all would get work this fall.

It might be considered something of a surprise that Shaun Alexander continues as the number three running back. Even in

DuBose Reinstates Spring Training Awards

With the close of spring football practice, Coach Mike DuBose announced the winners of the 1997 spring awards. At the conclusion of spring practice, in a tradition begun by Paul Bryant, Bama assistant coaches select winners of awards which are named in honor of former Tide greats.

"We went several years without selecting players for these awards," DuBose said, "but I wanted to return to recognizing these very deserving players. The awards are named for outstanding former players and it is an honor for them as well as for the players who earn them."

This year's winners are:

Lee Roy Jordan Headhunter-Senior defensive tackle Michael Myers.

Jerry Duncan I Like To Practice-Sophomore offensive guard Michael Moore.

Billy Neighbors Most Improved Defensive Lineman-Senior tackle Eric Kerley.

Woodrow Lowe Most Improved Linebacker-Junior Steve Stanley.

Bobby Johns Most Improved Defensive Back-Junior safety Kelvin Sigler.

Paul Crane Most Improved Offensive Lineman-Redshirt freshman center Paul Hogan.

Ray Perkins Most Improved Receiver-Sophomore split end Shamari Buchanan.

Johnny Musso Most Improved Offensive Back-Redshirt freshman fullback Dustin McClintock.

Sylvester Croom Commitment to Excellence-Senior running back Dennis Riddle.

Ozzie Newsome Most Improved Freshman-Flanker Tim Bowens.

Coach Bear Bryant Walk-On-Redshirt freshman safety Marcus Spencer.

Lifter of the Year-Senior tight end Rod Rutledge.

Alabama's new offense with a split backfield frequently featuring two running backs, Alexander couldn't crack the starting lineup. Dennis Riddle and Curtis Alexander continue to be the top two running backs. Of course, Shaun didn't help himself by reporting back a few hours late after spring break.

Bama was also able to move a fullback, Trevis Smith (back to his original linebacker

spot), as Ed Scissum and Dustin McClintock had good spring work.

Michael Vaughn had an exceptional spring, capped off by winning the Dixie Howell Award in the A-Day Game. Other flankers are adequate, but not exceptional.

At split end, Shamari Buchanan showed more improvement in the spring than might have been expected, but Calvin Hall did not

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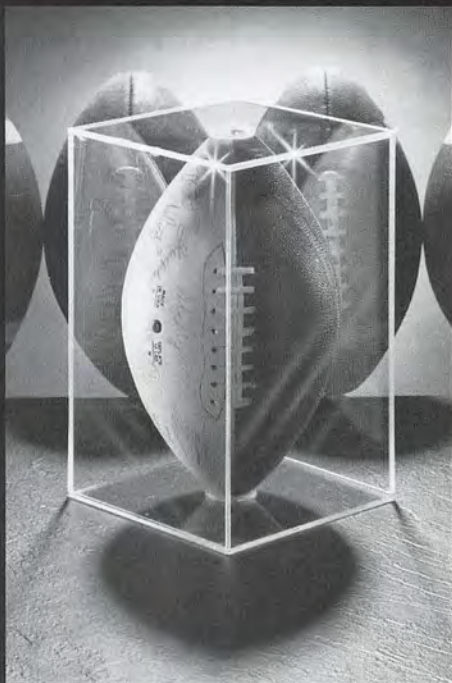
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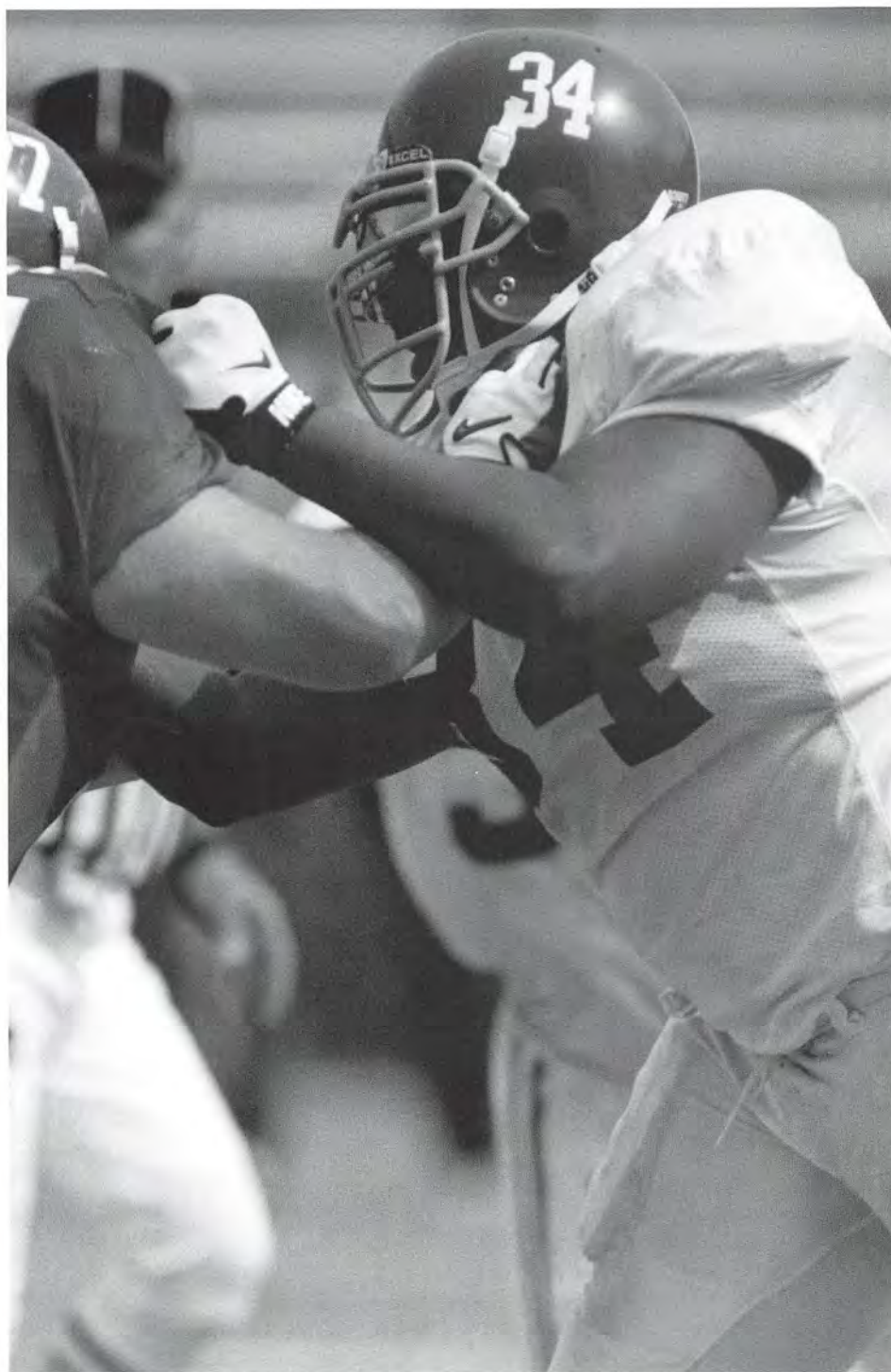
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Chris Hood has already proved that he is a good football player. Until he does consistently what he does occasionally he won't be a great player, but he's more than adequate. Robert Sutton Photo

show as much as would have been desired.

Tight end without Rod Rutledge was a weak position.

Neil Callaway coaches all of the offensive linemen now. It probably surprised him as much as anyone to finish the spring with two winning football players at center. Michael Ray, last year's back-up, and redshirt freshman Paul Hogan are neck-and-neck. Bama also came out of spring with good

depth and good performances at the guard positions, in part because Sage Spree was moved from left tackle to left guard. On the right side, Michael Moore is a great worker and Corey Kinnebrew has great potential. And Friend and Meadows return in the fall. Left tackle is fine with Chris Samuels returning as starter and redshirt freshman Griff Redmill finding a home there after moving from defensive line. But there is a

concern at right tackle. Chris Jordan was number one there through the first half of spring, then didn't return after the break. Jason McDonald shows occasional flashes, but doesn't get the job done consistently. Joel Holliday, a former left tackle, missed most of the spring with nagging injuries.

On defense, the first area of concern is linebacker. To the surprise of no one, losing the likes of Dwayne Rudd, Ralph Staten, Tyrell Buckner, Fernando Davis and John Tanks was noticeable. There was all sorts of mixing and matching during the spring, and a reasonable two-deep came out of it. Paul Pickett was number one from start to finish in the middle with Chris Edwards and Granison Wagstaff waging a pretty good war behind him. It wouldn't be a huge surprise to see the fourth man there, redshirt freshman Rob-E Staten, grow into a defensive lineman. On the weak side, Tito Smith and Steve Stanley both did well. Trevis Smith may have pulled slightly ahead of Eddie Hunter at the end of the spring at strongside linebacker, but Hunter may have been the best linebacker of the spring. It would be wrong to call Steve Harris a disappointment as he made the move from defensive end, but he's going to have to move faster to get playing time in the fall.

The starting front four is typical Alabama, which is very good. There were times when Michael Myers, who is still listed as a tackle but who could see some action at end, seemed to toy with offensive linemen. Tackle Eric Kerley has an excellent spring. Heath Panks showed improvement and Jamie Carter should be able to show a lot of improvement if he can get a grip on his weight. At end, Chris Hood lingers between very solid and sensational, while Reggie Grimes has good ability now and nearly unlimited potential. However, behind the

starters there wasn't much progress at end.

The secondary made improvement, particularly at safety, and that's partly because of the move of Foust from quarterback. But free safety Kelvin Sigler responded to the challenge of both Foust and talented walk-on Marcus Spencer. Andre Short was being challenged early in the spring at strong safety, but he pulled away from Jason Jones.

Alabama has excellent starting cornerbacks in Fernando Bryant on the left side and Deshea Townsend on the right side. Michael Feagin made some progress there, and the play of back-up safeties enabled Sigler to get some practice time at cornerback, which could be insurance. Cornerback is a spot where incoming freshmen will get a quick look.

There is no incoming freshman who could feel more confident than A.J. Diaz if he had seen spring work. Diaz is a place-kicker, and Alabama place-kicking

in the spring was not good. DuBose noted on several occasions that all four candidates (alphabetically, which is about as safe as any way to list them, Chad Barron, Brian Cunningham, Jonah Dismukes and Ryan Pflugner) had good leg strength, but none of them firmly established himself as the man to beat. The kickers aren't entirely to blame for the problems of the spring since a number of kicks were blocked.

On the other hand, Daniel Pope, who had performed well when he was competing for the starting job in 1995, returned to that form this spring and is clearly number one going to the fall.

There wasn't enough work on the return game and coverages on punts and kickoffs and the punt block team to say how that will be in the fall, but Arvin "Little" Richard (5-7, 170), who was frequently praised (but never played) by Gene Stallings in a redshirt freshman year, had a good spring as a return man.

1997 Alabama Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time*
Aug. 30	Houston @ Birmingham	1:00
Sept. 11	@ Vanderbilt (ESPN)	7:00
Sept. 20	Arkansas	TBA
Sept. 27	Southern Miss @ Birmingham	TBA
Oct. 4	@ Kentucky	6:00
Oct. 18	Tennessee @ Birmingham	TBA
Oct. 25	@ Ole Miss	TBA
Nov. 1	Louisiana Tech (homecoming)	1:00
Nov. 8	LSU	TBA
Nov. 15	Mississippi State	TBA
Nov. 22	@ Auburn	6:30
Dec. 6	SEC Championship @ Atlanta	7:00

*Central time, subject to change

A Guess At Alabama's Spring Football Depth Chart

Although Alabama does not issue its depth chart, a reasonable guess based on past performances and on observation of practices can be made at how the Crimson Tide finished up spring training. Not all of those who took part in spring drills are included on this depth chart. Additionally, the depth chart does not include tight end Rod Rutledge, who was clearly number one before suffering a spring-ending knee injury, nor does it include three players who missed the spring because of recuperation from surgery. They are guard Will Friend (knee), guard-center Brenon Meadows (shoulder) and cornerback Thomas Hill (ankle). All are expected back for pre-season drills in August. Additionally, the arrival of 25 signees and more walk-ons in August will almost certainly enter into the fall depth chart.

Offense

Split End-Shamari Buchanan, Calvin Hall, Thad Abernathy
 Left Tackle-Chris Samuels, Griff Redmill
 Left Guard-Sage Spree, Kelvis White, Josh Swords
 Center-Michael Ray, Paul Hogan
 Right Guard-Michael Moore, Corey Kinnebrew, Chris Sign
 Right Tackle-Jason McDonald, Joel Holliday
 Tight End-Clint Waggoner, Rhett Crutchfield, Adam Joiner
 Quarterback-Freddie Kitchens, Lance Tucker, John David Phillips
 Halfback-Dennis Riddle, Curtis Alexander, Shaun Alexander, Montoya Madden
 Fullback-Ed Scissum, Dustin McClintock
 Flanker-Michael Vaughn, Chad Goss, Tim Bowens

Defense

Left End-Chris Hood, Edgar Walker
 Left Tackle-Eric Kerley, Heath Panks, Marquis Forge
 Right Tackle-Michael Myers, Jamie Carter, Chris Warren
 Right End-Reggie Grimes, Kevin Flowers
 Weakside Linebacker-Tito Smith, Steve Stanley
 Middle Linebacker-Paul Pickett, Chris Edwards, Granison Wagstaff, Rob-E Staten
 Strongside Linebacker-Trevis Smith, Eddie Hunter, Steve Harris
 Left Cornerback-Fernando Bryant, Michael Feagin
 Right Cornerback-Deshea Townsend, Owen Winston
 Strong Safety-Andre Short, Jason Jones, Chauncey Teague
 Safety-Kelvin Sigler, Warren Foust, Marcus Spencer, Travis Crim

Kickers

Place-Kicker-Brian Cunningham, Ryan Pflugner, Chad Barron, Jonah Dismukes

Punter-Daniel Pope, Jason Kellen

This Was Nothing Like A Game

by Kirk McNair

Defense dominated as
White defeated Red, 9-5

It was hardly a surprise that Alabama's A-Day Game looked nothing like the team should look in the fall. That's situation normal at Alabama and every other school. In the spring, the squad is providing the players for two teams instead of for one and playing without nearly a third of the squad, which reports in August in the form of 1997 signees. Additionally, even if all of the offensive and defensive plans had been installed (to say nothing of the kicking game), it's not likely to be shown in a spring contest.

Beyond that, Alabama's A-Day Game didn't even look much like the practices that had gone before it. The defense dominated the spring game with the White winning 9-5 over the Red. Both sides were made up of a handful of first team players on both offense and defense.

Head Coach Mike DuBose, who watched the game from the press box, said, "Probably the best thing about it was we didn't get anyone hurt." From a coach's standpoint, the A-Day Game is pretty much a wasted practice.

One thing about the game that did look like most of spring work was in the kicking game. Although place-kicking was generally very, very poor, nearly half of the scoring was on field goals. And more than half came from the kicking game, although that's not a positive. The first score was a 19-yard field goal by Brian Cunningham for the White, but that would not be cause for offensive celebration since the team with offensive stars Freddie Kitchens at quarterback and Shaun Alexander at running back had first and goal at the two-yard line and ended up having to kick on fourth and goal from the three.

The most spectacular play of the day that counted was the second White score, a 94-yard touchdown play on a pass from Lance Tucker to Dixie Howell Memorial Award winner Michael Vaughn. Vaughn broke out of a potential tackle by Kelvin Sigler at the 20 and had an easy run to the end zone, a run that included some show-boating that brought a comment from DuBose after the game. And then on the extra point try, Fernando Bryant blocked the kick and Reggie Grimes picked it off in mid-air. The big defensive end ran it back for two points for the Red team. Grimes won the other spring game award, the Dwight Stephenson Most Valuable Lineman.



Michael Vaughn was selected as winner of the Dixie Howell Award, which is presented to the most valuable player in the A-Day Game. Vaughn did an excellent job of turning a short pass from Lance Tucker into a 94-yard touchdown. However, Vaughn, who has a habit of trying to intimidate the defense in practice, will get some behavior modification from his show-boating in front of Tide fans.

Robert Sutton Photo

The final score of the game was a 29-yard field goal by Jonah Dismukes for the Red team. The kick by Dismukes was by far the most authoritative of the game.

The White was led in rushing by Ed Scissum with five carries for 44 yards, Shaun Alexander with 10 runs for 29 yards and walk-on Matt Teague with three rushes for 22 yards. Vaughn had 15 yards on an end-around to go with his 116 yards on five receptions. Tucker completed five of 14 passes for 139 yards, while Kitchens, who was intercepted on the first play of the game, hit five of 10 passes for 56 yards.

The Red was led in rushing by quarterback John David Phillips, who scrambled for 43 yards on four runs. He was also sacked twice for a total of six yards, giving him net rushing yardage of 37. Expected stars Curtis Alexander (four runs for 26 yards) and Dennis Riddle (six for 19) were overshadowed by Arvin Richard, who had five runs for 27 yards and returned three punts for 23 yards. Phillips hit six of 18 passes for 87 yards and suffered two interceptions. Chad

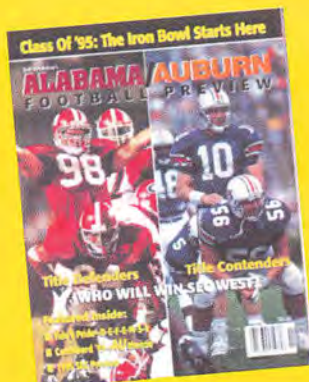
Goss had two catches for 35 yards and Shamari Buchanan one for 36. A Phillips-to-Buchanan pass for an apparent 39-yard touchdown and the lead late in the game was wiped out by an offensive pass interference call.

DuBose was not happy with the penalty situation. The Red was penalized 10 times for 76 yards and the White six times for 36 yards.

He was happy with the punting. Daniel Pope, who has been the leader all spring, had four punts for a 46.0 average, including a 72-yard beauty that rolled out of bounds at the White 10-yard line. For the White, Patrick Morgan averaged 39.0 on two punts and Jason Kellen had one for 42 yards.

Interceptions were turned in by Bryant and Sigler for the Red and by Deshea Townsend and Steve Harris for the White.

Linebacker Eddie Hunter had eight primary tackles and three assists and made two tackles behind the line of scrimmage to lead the Red defense. Andre Short led the White tacklers with five.



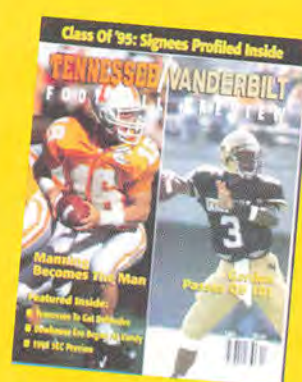
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One Of The Strengths Of Football

by Kirk McNair

His job is to make Bama a stronger football team

Terry Jones has looked to the past in order to help Alabama Head Football Coach Mike DuBose build for the future. Jones is beginning his tenth year as a strength coach at Alabama, and he is now head coach of strength and conditioning, a position awarded him in March.

When DuBose took over as head coach in January, he immediately placed Jones in charge of the Crimson Tide off-season conditioning program. And Jones went back to his notes and his memory and to a couple of men from past days. Jones was an excellent Alabama player in the mid-1970s. In those days there were no specialists in strength and conditioning. Trainer Jim Goostree and Defensive Line Coach Ken Donahue handled the off-season program.

"I had some notes and Rocky Colburn (another former Tide player and a former assistant strength coach for the Tide who is now head coach at Bibb County High School) had some notes, and between us we were able to kind of put it together," Jones said. Additionally, Goostree dropped by and reminded Jones of some drills. The result: "We were able to establish sort of a modified 'Little Gym' off-season program," Jones said.

When Jones was a player the off-season program was divided into two parts, workouts in the lower gym in Coleman Coliseum under Goostree and weightroom drills under Donahue. "When you came out of that, you felt you had earned the right to wear that crimson jersey," Jones said.

He said the players learned quickly that the off-season program would be pretty intense. "The NCAA has very strict rules on how long you have the players for practice and for off-season conditioning," Jones said. "In the off-season program you can work with them eight hours a week. I was determined they would be working all eight of those hours. The first time I took them into the indoor practice facility and cranked the temperature up to about 85 degrees, I got their attention. We went through some calisthenics and some foot quickness drills and they thought it was over. I said, 'Now, we're going to do some mat drills.' They said, 'Mat drills? What's that?' Those were the drills we had done in the lower gym."

Jones didn't have any problems working the program around players' class schedule. "We started at 6 a.m.," he said.

During spring training, DuBose made sure that the strength and conditioning program

continued, giving Jones the players for 45 minutes twice a week. Jones said the result of the strength and conditioning program during the spring will determine how the program is continued during the season.

A final important aspect of off-season work is the summer program. "This may be the most important time, but it's voluntary," Jones said. "I've got to figure out some way to motivate them to be here in the summer."

Jones said the program he conducts is different from the one he went through. "I wish we could have that same environment we had in the lower gym," he said. "We're trying to emulate part of it, notably the continuous movement." As for weight training, he said the emphasis now is more on "Olympic style lifting, which provides the explosive strength needed for football," with a smattering of more traditional weight-lifting to provide bulk.

Although Alabama has an excellent weight room with state-of-the-art equipment, Jones said there is room for improvement. "Like a lot of things around here, Alabama was the first to have a facility like this," he said. "Coach (Ray) Perkins had this building built in 1983 and no one in this part of the country had anything like it. But over the years other schools have taken what we've done and improved on it, and now we've got to make some improvements to ours. It's adequate, but it's not the best."

In addition to strength and conditioning, DuBose has put Jones in charge of his much talked-about discipline program. DuBose has down-played that, but the players are quite aware of new policy. "It's just a matter of doing the right thing," DuBose said. "You don't go into your home with dirty shoes and the players aren't going to go in the dressing room with mud on their cleats. They aren't going to throw tape on the floor or park on a yellow curb. If they do, they get to see Terry Jones at 5:30 a.m., and Terry Jones doesn't like to have to be at work at 5:30 a.m."

"I call them reminders," Jones said. "A study period is 50 minutes, so I make the reminder 50 minutes. When I first took over the off-season program for football, I was still working with basketball, too. The football group showed up for their six o'clock workout and I was still giving a reminder to a couple of basketball players. They were stretched out with a trainer—I always have a trainer there—looking at them. The football players got an idea then they didn't want any reminders."

"In fact, I've only had four football players in for reminders. Word got around pretty quick. They all think I really wanted to be a Marine boot sergeant."

Jones earned high marks for his strength and conditioning work with the men's bas-

ketball team, notably taking two players in different directions. Roy Rogers showed up at Alabama as a tall, skinny center and left as a 250-pound first round NBA draft choice. Thalamus McGhee showed up at Alabama from junior college at about 330 pounds and showed up for his senior season at 260 pounds and was able to play over 22 minutes per game.

Jones said he was grateful for the opportunity to work with athletes in sports other than football. "People aren't as aware of some of the other sports as they are of football, but when you work with them you gain an appreciation of what they go through in order to succeed in their competition," he said. "I was also proud that every year I worked with the men's and women's basketball teams, they qualified for post-season tournaments, even though the men's team elected not to go this year."

DuBose has complimented the work of Jones numerous times. The head football coach has noted that Alabama "has not been a strong football team. We're not there yet, but we're stronger." DuBose added, "Terry Jones is an extremely important coach for us with a critical job to do. He's doing an exceptional job. We probably can't pay him what he's worth."

Jones knows the strength coach has to have the support of the head football coach. "He knows and I know we've got to do some up-grading," Jones said.

There have been some unusual twists in Terry Jones' career. He was recruited out of Washington County High School in Sandersville, Georgia, by former Alabama Assistant Coaches John Mitchell and Curley Hallman. Hallman is now back as an assistant for the Tide. A linebacker and lineman in high school, he spent his freshman season in 1974 as a noseguard for the Crimson Tide, backing up Gus White and Colenzo Hubbard. As a sophomore he made the switch to starting center and was All-Southeastern Conference as a junior.

He was a pre-season All-America center in 1977, his senior year, but a funny thing happened in the spring prior to that season. Coach Paul Bryant took a pre-season All-America center and moved him back to noseguard.

"It started in practice," Jones said. "Dwight Stephenson had been a defensive end, but they wanted to look at him at center. In practice, we would go up against one another. Then, I realized that Coach Donahue was coming over and coaching me. It was pretty fierce. I wasn't going to get whipped and Dwight was trying to win the position. Before the spring was out he had taken my position and I was trying to kill him every day. We wouldn't even talk after practice. By the time supper was over we

were talking to one another, but in practice the next day it would start all over."

The move wasn't a great one for Jones to begin with. "I started out kind of slow, and Coach Bryant told me if I didn't start playing better, he was going to redshirt me. I think I won the ABC player of the game award in our next game."

Jones wanted to go into high school coaching following his playing career. "Coach Goostree and Coach Donahue talked me into giving pro football a chance," he said. Jones was taking an English test when the pro draft was held that year and didn't know until later he had been drafted in the 11th round by the Green Bay Packers, then coached by former Bama quarterback Bart Starr. "When I got back to the dorm, there was a note for me to see Coach Bryant at 6:30 the next morning," Jones said. Bryant told Jones to call Starr and "tell him if I was going to play."

Jones showed up for a mini-camp at 280 pounds and out of shape. The defensive tackles coach at Green Bay was David Hannah. "He told me to come back in shape or he'd send me back to Coach Bryant in a pine box," Jones said. He reported back in shape and had an eight-year career with the Packers.

Following his playing career, Jones returned to Tuscaloosa and taught school for two years. He wanted to stay in shape and he worked out with Bama's strength coaches, Wingo and Colburn. "One day they told me they had an opening for an assistant strength coach," Jones said. "I applied and Coach Sloan (Athletics Director Steve Sloan) hired me. I worked with the non-revenue sports, then came over and helped out with football. It made for long days," he said; then added, "Just like now."

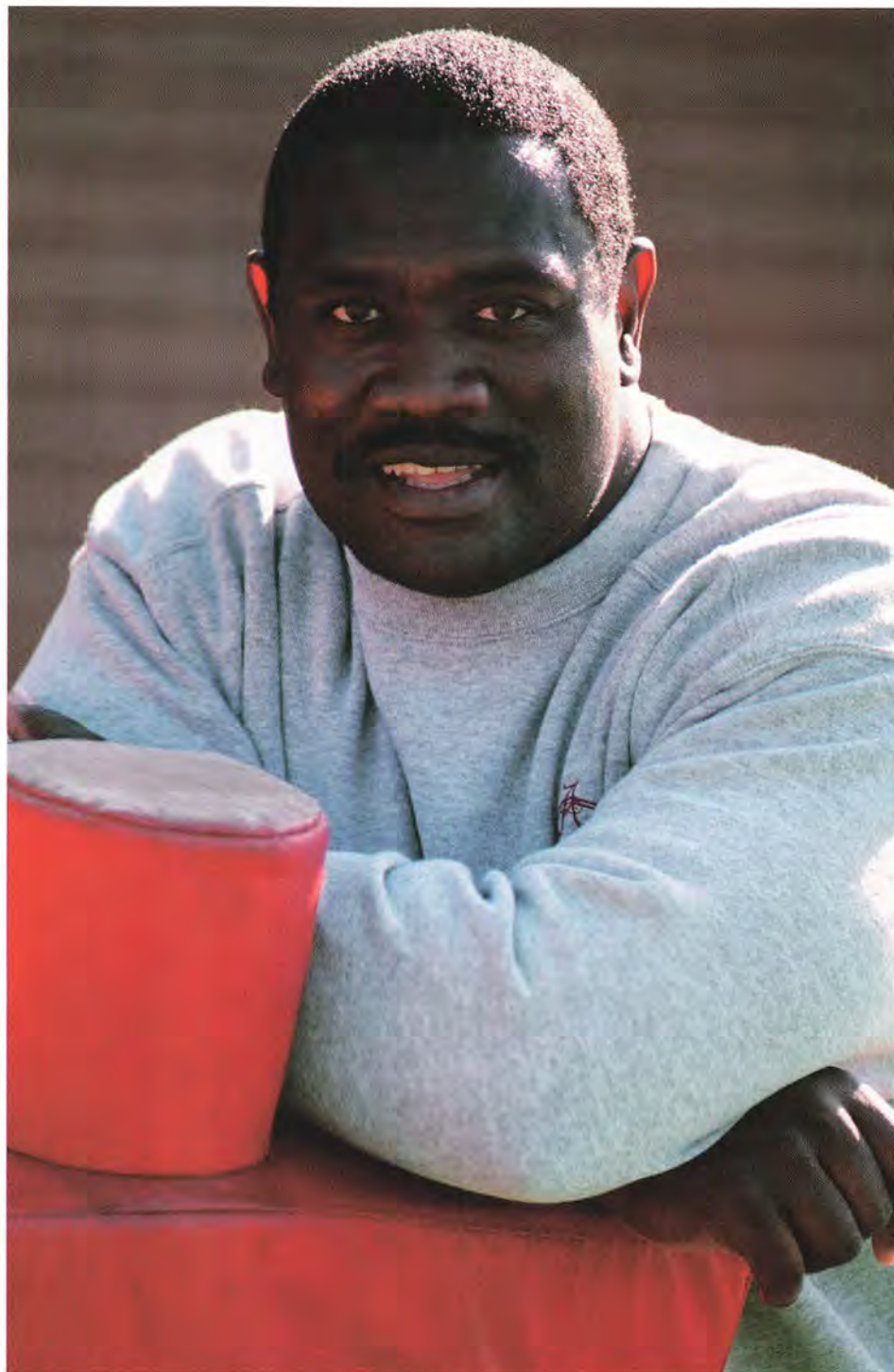
Jones said one reason he was able to play eight years of pro football was his work with Al Miller. Ironically, Jones was Alabama's second choice to be strength coach and got the job when Miller turned it down to go to the Atlanta Falcons. "He's the best," Jones said. "I'd come back in the off season and work out under Al (who had joined the Bama staff under Coach Bryant)." He said he and two other former Tiders who were playing with the Packers, Rich Wingo and Randy Scott, spent the summers working with Miller. And Jones said he continues to stay in touch with Miller and with Miller's former Bama assistant, Kent Johnson, who is now strength coach for Green Bay.

Jones said if Alabama had been able to hire Miller, "It would have been great for me to work under him."

Jones said, "I had to prove I could run the program and get people to work." He said that Athletics Director Bob Bockrath "kept in touch with me and let me know what was going on. He'd tell me to keep going. Then one day he told me I had the job."

When Jones was a sophomore at Alabama, he met a young woman from Bessemer, Willie Mays Edwards. Following the NFL draft in his se-

MAY '97/BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide



Terry Jones had a very good playing career at Alabama and after playing professional football returned as a strength coach for sports other than football. Now he's in charge of the Crimson Tide football strength program.
Barry Fikes Photo

nior season, in 1978, he and Willie Mays were married. While Terry was playing football, Willie Mays was going to school, eventually finishing with three degrees from The University, bachelor's, master's and law. She is now a senior staff attorney for Tuscaloosa Legal Services.

They have four children, one of whom will be mentioned prominently in sports publications in upcoming months. Terry, Jr., is a 17-

year old upcoming senior at Tuscaloosa Central High School. While his father was a high school All-America, Terry, Jr., is about to be named a pre-season All-America by recruiting analyst Tom Lemming. Terry is a 6-4, 250-pound linebacker/defensive end. He's also an outstanding basketball player and could have a future as a tight end.

The other Jones children are Teresha, Alisha and Jason.

It's Been Long, Winding Road

by Donald F. Staffo

Former prep All-America showing what he can do

Coming out of Salmen High School in Slidell, Louisiana, Heath Panks was a *Parade* All-America, a *Blue Chip* All-

America, a *USA Today* second team All-America, and a first team 4A all-state player. Four years later, Panks has not played much football, despite having been a student of three different colleges.

Because of various circumstances, Panks' college career has been on a scenic route. Now he feels he has an opportunity to show his skills, although it's not what he had envisioned.

Panks was a dominating player in high school. In his senior season, 1992, he

recorded 94 tackles, 14 quarterback sacks, four fumble recoveries, one interception and three blocked punts. For his career he had 163 tackles, 20 quarterback sacks, 27 tackles for losses, and six fumble recoveries. He was named district player of the year and all-state both his junior and senior seasons and earned the attention of some of the nation's top football schools, including Nebraska, Southern Cal, Notre Dame and Alabama. Panks said he narrowed the list to Alabama and LSU, and finally chose his home-state university. The head coach of the Bengal Tigers was Curley Hallman, who is now coach of Alabama's secondary.

"I was born and raised in Louisiana," Panks said. "I was always an LSU fan and tended to lean towards LSU during recruiting."

Panks was redshirted as a freshman in 1993. That winter he faced a major challenge. In December, 1993, he had married his high school sweetheart, Nicole Breedlove. Early in 1994, the couple learned there would soon be a third Panks in the family. Panks withdrew from school. "I was young," he said. "I was shocked when I found out Nicole was pregnant. It's no excuse, but I guess I didn't have my priorities in order."

Following the birth of his daughter, Kayla, Panks returned to LSU and the team, but the time away from school and football had put him far behind. He left LSU again, this time for Pearl River Community College in Poplarville, Mississippi. While he earned his associates degree in athletics administration, he did not play football at Pearl River. While he had been away from the football field for two and a half years, he still had a reputation and he was still major college football size. Alabama was interested.

"Next to LSU, Alabama was the other school I was considering all along," Panks said. "I was aware of Alabama's tradition, and I remembered Coach (Mike) DuBose recruiting me when I was in high school. He didn't beat around the bush. He was straight-forward with me about what it would be like to play football at Alabama. There was no red carpet treatment and no bull." And Panks had liked what DuBose had to say in 1993. When the offer of a scholarship came again in February, 1996, Panks was ready to move his family to Tuscaloosa.

"I prayed about it and my family and close friends prayed about it," he said. "I believe everything happened for the best. I believe this is where the Lord wanted me to be, so this is where I wound up. I thank God for giving me a second chance."

Trying to make up for lost time hasn't been easy. The layoff resulted in a loss of quickness, speed, agility and foot-

*BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/MAY '97



Heath Panks was one of the nation's top prospects coming out of high school. He started at LSU under Curley Hallman, and now he's back with Hallman, this time at Alabama.

Barry Fikes Photo

work. Additionally, Panks didn't lift weights regularly during his absence from football. The overall effect of time away from football cannot be minimized.

Panks' position coach, new Defensive Coordinator Ellis Johnson, said, "He has got good overall size (6-4, 290) and fairly good technique, but he needs to work in the weight room to get stronger. If he works very hard in the off season and in the fall, he's got a legitimate chance to challenge. Right now, he's definitely behind Eric Kerley at right defensive tackle."

While Kerley is the leader at nose (right) tackle, Michael Myers is the front-runner at three (left) tackle. Johnson said that Panks is "definitely our third best tackle, ahead of Jamie Carter, who also is doing a pretty good job." Johnson noted that Panks and some of the other tackles can play either tackle spot, a good thing since the Crimson Tide lacks depth in the defensive line. Regardless, Johnson said, "There's always going to be competition for those jobs."

Panks is aware of the competition, and is also aware that Alabama signed six defensive linemen in the latest recruiting period. "I feel that I can play," Panks said. "I have always believed that I can be good at anything I do. The competition doesn't worry me. It doesn't make any difference if we have a lot of depth or a little depth. In order for me to play I've got to work extra hard in the weight room during the off season."

"I've come a long way since last August, but I still have a lot to improve on. Summer

will be critical for me, but if I work extra hard, I feel I can get back my quickness and my speed and get stronger. Lack of strength is definitely my weakness. There are guys in college who bench press 500 pounds, and I'm benching only 350."

Johnson has no problem with Panks' effort. "I've very pleased with his attitude on the practice field," the coach said. "He's got good work habits, he tries very hard, and he wants to get better."

Although sparingly, Panks played in about half of Alabama's games last year, including most of the fourth quarter against both Mississippi and in the Citrus Bowl against Michigan. He said that he was disappointed not to play more in Alabama's game at Baton Rouge. He said that DuBose had planned to put Panks in for the final five minutes, but the Alabama offense kept the ball for most of that time.

"I didn't let that get to me," Panks said. "I was just happy we beat them 26-0. It was a great feeling because there were four or five guys from my hometown playing for LSU and a bunch of my friends go to school there. Before the game all I heard was LSU this and LSU that."

Panks said there wasn't a great deal of difference in going to school and practicing football at Alabama from what he did at LSU, except for one huge difference. When he was at LSU he was single and living and eating in the dormitory with his Bengal Tigers teammates. Now he's married and has

a family and lives in an apartment with his wife and daughter.

More than that, Panks has matured and has put his priorities in order. And he sees things differently. "Some people wanted to be my friend when I signed with LSU, but then gave up on me when I left," he said. "Now that I'm playing at Alabama, some of those same people want to be my friend again. They're there when you're up, but not there when you're down. But my family and my real friends and coaches all stayed with me, supported me, and remained interested in me through everything. One told me, 'It's not what happens to you, it's how you react to what happens to you.' I feel I've responded well to the situation."

With a wife and a three-year-old daughter, Panks carries a load not shared by most college students, and certainly not by most of his football teammates. But he said that his family comes first and that he will do whatever it takes to provide for them.

For Panks, who has only one year of eligibility, it's now or never to show if he can finally reach that potential he showed as a prep All-America. "My goals are to play a lot and do the best that I can do and see if I can further my football career, if not in the NFL then maybe in the Canadian Football League. If not, I'll get my degree and go back home and teach and coach. Everything is up to me and depends on how hard I work."

Despite a college career getting off to a sputtering stop-and-go start that took him through three states, Heath Panks wants to finish it with a flourish for the Crimson Tide.

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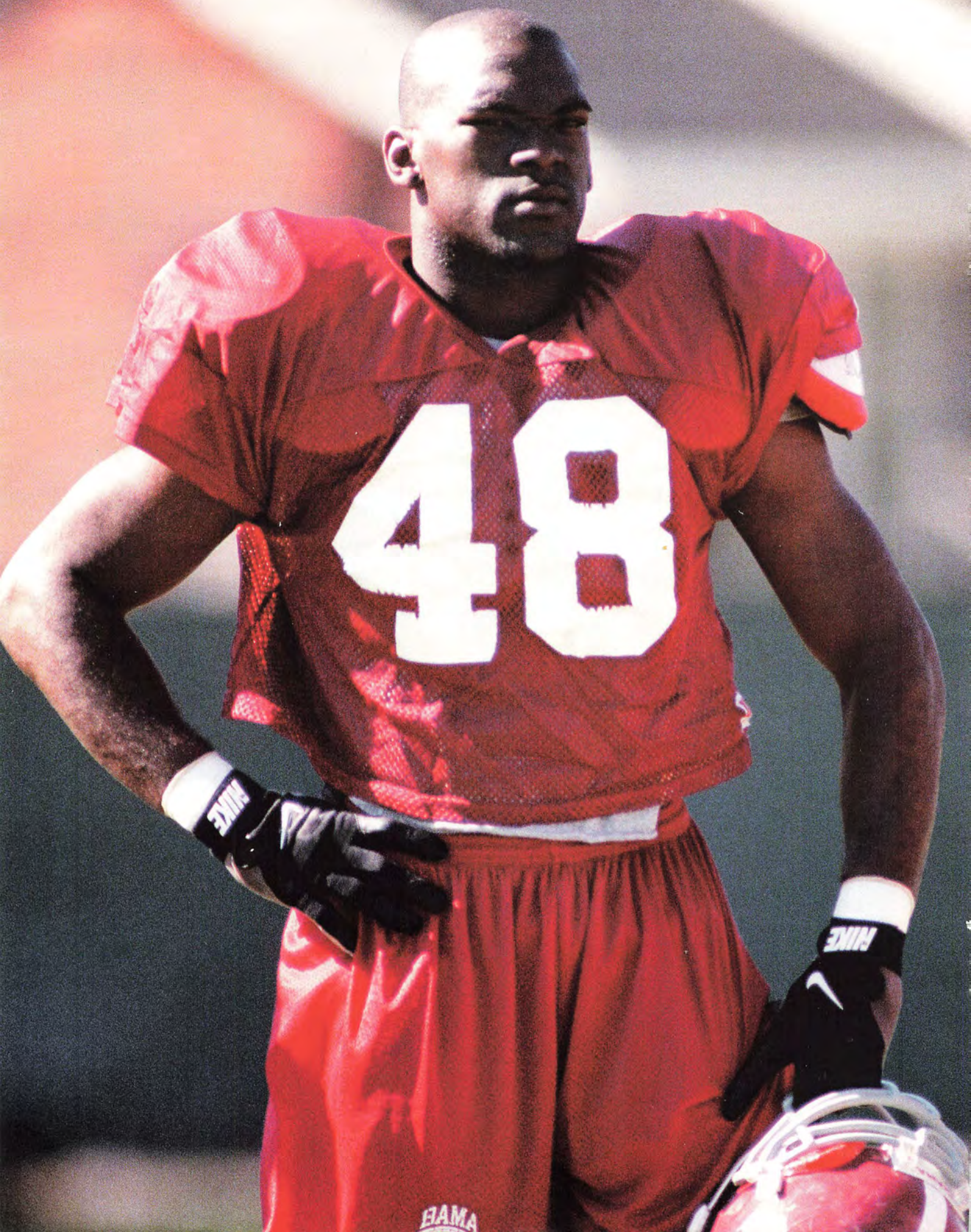
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For Some, Springtime Time To Make Move

by Jeff Janes

Player moves enable DuBose to make most of Crimson Tide assets

Since his coronation as head coach, Mike DuBose has conducted business in workmanlike fashion. And while appearances lead to the conclusion that the proverbial fat is being trimmed, DuBose is simply spreading the already thin number of scholarship players around both sides of the ball in an effort to bolster depth. The shift of former second team quarterback Warren Foust to free safety was the most publicized position move during spring drills but it was not the only one. Redshirt junior Trevis Smith and redshirt freshman Griff Redmill are also adjusting to different roles within the new regime.

Foust's move to the defensive secondary relieves congestion at quarterback. The move could be seen as serving the dual role of killing a potential controversy at the quarterback position while giving more depth to a safety spot thinned by the graduation of Cedric Samuel. Foust, who was the number two (albeit little-used) quarterback last fall and listed number two on the depth chart going into spring training, is not the least bit angry over the move and maintains his desire to play the game instead of squabbling over playing time at quarterback. "It's not a big secret that I'm a different type quarterback than the traditional drop-back passer," Foust said. "There has always been talk about moving me. I just want to play." Kelvin Sigler, while in the position to have an outstanding junior season, returns as the only player with extensive game experience at free safety. Other possibilities at the position include junior Owen Winston (who has worked primarily at cornerback) and redshirt freshman Jason Jones, a few walk-ons who made notable contributions during the spring, and the not-so-tempting option of playing some of the incoming freshmen from this year's signing class. As far as the quarterback position goes, Freddie Kitchens will be the starter while John David Phillips

Trevis Smith came to Alabama as a linebacker, enjoyed success after being shifted to fullback, and now is headed back to defense since Alabama finds itself short of linebackers.

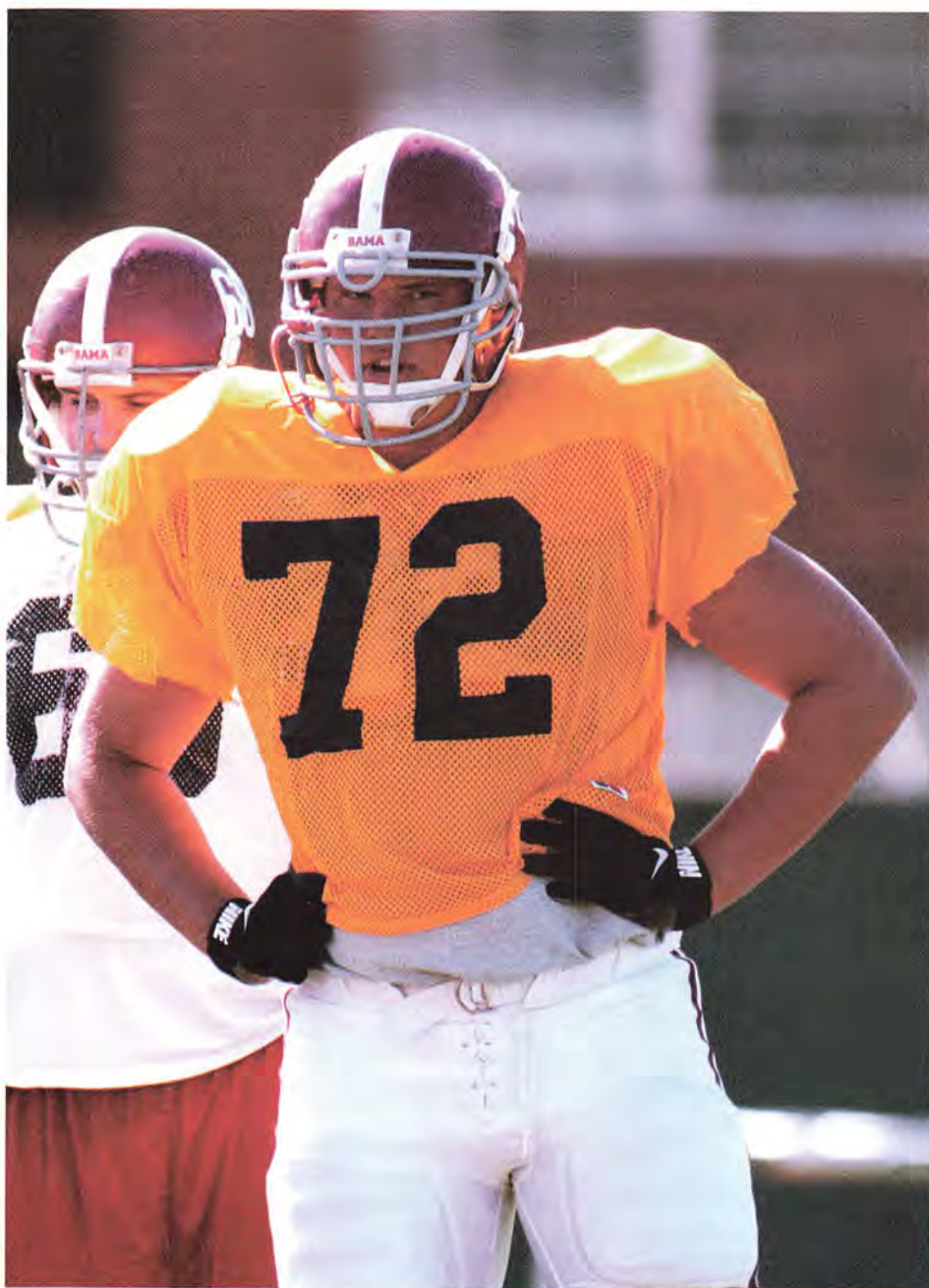
Barry Fikes Photo

and Lance Tucker will serve as back-ups.

A question concerning the move is if Foust will receive playing time on defense. He has worked exclusively at quarterback since entering the Alabama program and the move to defense must be considered "late" in terms of his development as a safety. And the idea that a converted quarterback somehow knows more about playing in the secondary than a defensive back who has spent four years learning the position is mostly myth. "The biggest adjustment has been getting reps [repetitions] and adjusting to offensive movement," Foust said. "Once the offense starts moving, you have to adjust." However, Foust is an intelligent man, a fact which Alabama coaches hope will accelerate his transition as he continues to learn the coverages and schemes of Coach Ellis Johnson's defense. Foust has expressed a positive attitude toward his new role and is openly optimistic he will receive playing time at the position. "Moving positions is not something one can expect to do immediately with success," Foust said. "I have to get reps but that is something that will come. All this practice is learning time."

There is no question of Foust's athletic prowess, and he has never lacked for confidence. Therefore, the probability that Alabama coaches will extensively use him seems very likely considering the lack of depth at safety. DuBose has been complimentary of Foust, emphasizing his range on the field. "As he develops his tackling skills, I think he'll be able to help us," DuBose said. Still, there is a level of skill and confidence that Foust, the free safety, will need when facing the Tennessees and Floridas who seemingly throw on every down. Thus far his experience has been limited to spring scrimmages against an Alabama offense which is still feeling out its fourth offensive coordinator in five seasons.

The fact that DuBose has enough confidence to move a three-year quarterback to free safety is a compliment to Foust's all-around ability but only time and positive results will prove the move profitable. If Foust does not adjust to defense, DuBose has suggested that perhaps another position change will be in order. DuBose has mentioned that he wants Foust to be actively involved on Saturdays. "We need to make sure his hands are in on things," DuBose said. Based on that statement, the most logical move would be to try Foust at a receiver position. However, there is a solid rotation at receiver and the position will receive additional manpower in the fall when two receiver-types are expected to report. Due to the more pressing need for help in the secondary it



Griff Redmill was strictly a defensive player at Walker High School in Jasper and was recruited to play defense at Alabama, but Tide coaches believe he can help the Crimson Tide as an offensive lineman. He's working at left defensive tackle now.

Barry Fikes Photo

stands to reason that Foust will stay at safety. "I enjoy playing defense because you just play football and because I now have a larger role," Foust said.

Foust showed his athletic ability in one of the spring scrimmages with an excellent run-back after making a nice interception.

Trevis Smith's "new" linebacker position is not new to him because he was recruited as a linebacker. Smith was an all-state linebacker at Robert E. Lee High School in Montgomery and originally committed to Auburn. Before he had the opportunity to sign a letter of intent, the Tigers

filled their scholarship limit and signed the maximum number of players allowed by the NCAA, leaving Smith without a place to play football. However, a scholarship opened for him at Alabama when 1994 signee Michael Coleman opted to play baseball for the Boston Red Sox organization instead of playing college football. Coach Gene Stallings offered the vacated grant-in-aid to Smith and he accepted it.

At that time, any notion Smith had of immediate or extensive playing time was wishful thinking due to the presence of a deep rotation of talented upperclassmen at linebacker. During 1994 Smith competed

with a stockpile of other players at the position and was redshirted.

After the 1994 season and the graduation of starting fullback Tarrant Lynch, Smith was moved to offense to supplement the lack of depth. However, most of his play was limited to special teams. The pleasant surprise was Smith's ability to catch the ball coming out of the backfield. By last season he had made enough progress as a blocker to work his way into regular playing time behind Ed Scissum. And when Scissum suffered a broken arm, Smith became the starter for the last half of the season.

Even though his progress was impressive, the true fullback position became virtually obsolete when DuBose hired Bruce Arians from the New Orleans Saints to coordinate the offense. While Arians has not implemented the run-and-shoot, he has stated that he wants to achieve a balanced offense which spreads players across the field, stretches the defense, and emphasizes speed. Instead of the often used I-formation which Tide fans grew accustomed to under Stallings, DuBose and Arians favor more of a split-back set with runningbacks who are equally adept at catching, blocking, and running. The Crimson Tide has no less than five runningbacks with live game experience not including redshirt freshman Dustin McClintock, a big back who has drawn praise from DuBose for his performance in the new system. Combined with the plethora of returning talent at runningback, the emergence of McClintock, and the lack of experience and depth at linebacker, Smith became a prime candidate to change positions. "Coach DuBose asked me if I would consider moving," Smith said. "I saw it become more of a possibility the closer spring got and we discussed it before drills began."

The loss of Tyrell Buckner, Fernando Davis, John Tanks, Dwayne Rudd, and Ralph Staten leaves huge gaps at all three linebacker positions but it also creates an opportunity for playing time. Smith, despite his redefined role, has accepted the challenge and will push for the starting job at weakside linebacker. The will position as it is known in Alabama nomenclature, is responsible for playing the run and pass equally well. "It is an aggressive position and I haven't lost the mentality for it," Smith said. He is soft-spoken, does not do a lot of on-the-field trash-talking, and in the spring he earned the red practice jersey identifying the defensive first team players in practice. "I feel comfortable with my run play but I'm still working on coverages and playing receivers," Smith said. The difference in runningback and linebacker is a matter of action versus reaction, and, as for Foust, Smith's continued development is dependent on practice repetition. "On defense you react to what the offense does, but on offense you can blow the whole play if you miss an assignment," Smith said.

A relevant question has to involve Smith's enthusiasm for changing positions so late in his career, especially after gaining first-team

BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/MAY '97

status as a fullback. "The change really doesn't matter though because I played defense all my life before coming to Alabama," Smith said. "I really can't say where I would be if I were still on offense, but I will compete no matter what position I play." The transition has been aided by Linebackers Coach Jeff Rouzie, who has spent time helping Smith re-learn everything. "He's been very helpful preparing me and making it possible for me to come in and watch extra film," Smith said.

The offensive line has been an area of fan criticism for several years, a characteristic Alabama followers hope Coach Neil Callaway will remedy due to his history as a top-notch line coach. This criticism is due partially to the fact that Alabama has not had the luxury of quality depth, the inability of blue-chip recruits to develop as fast as many people felt they should, and the perception that the offensive line has been undersized in relation to opposing defensive linemen. So far, DuBose and company have placed more emphasis on the physical size of Alabama linemen. At the end of spring drills the offensive line had only a few players who weighed less than 280 pounds, a fact which does not necessarily make better blockers but does raise eyebrows of those who follow the progress of the Alabama offensive line.

This spring Griff Redmill made his first tour of duty with the Crimson Tide offensive front after spending last season on defense. The Jasper native was recruited as a defensive end/tackle and spent last season on the sideline as he took a redshirt. At Walker High School, Redmill played on the defensive line exclusively and never even took a practice snap on the offensive side.

His transition to the left offensive tackle position is one which requires some explanation. Depth was not a concern at left tackle during 1996 because the spot was split among Joel Holliday, Chris Samuels, and Sage Spree. After 1996 right tackle Pete DiMario graduated, Holliday moved to right tackle to create more depth, and Spree moved to left guard leaving Samuels as the only player with any experience at left tackle. No tackles were among the 1996 signing class unless Corey Kinnebrew counts, but he now plays guard. With that said, it became necessary to create depth where it no longer existed.

"I'm better suited to play on the offensive side of the ball," Redmill said. "Coach DuBose thought I would have a chance to play early on offense." Like Warren Foust and Trevis Smith, Redmill is excited to play a position where he will have the opportunity to contribute immediately and often.

Redmill is concerned with the condition of

his physical stature since the requirements to play offensive line are much different from the defensive line. According to Redmill, Callaway wants him to weigh between 280-290 pounds. "He wants me bigger, and that is not a problem, but I don't want to get to the point where I have a problem controlling my weight," Redmill said. "It might take away from my conditioning." Redmill currently weighs slightly less than 280 pounds and is concerned with his strength but plans to spend half of his summer in Tuscaloosa working himself into better shape. Redmill's biggest concern is the adjustment to an offensive mind-set. "I didn't know the first thing and I'm still having trouble with the terminology," Redmill said. "On one offensive play you have to be able to adjust to four or five defensive fronts. I have to learn to block all over again too, so this is a challenge."

As with Foust and Smith, Redmill is not as concerned with moving to another position as he is about receiving playing time. Redmill points out that he is only an injury away from being pressed into the starting role, a position he would not likely have been in if he were still on defense. "You have always got to be ready," he said.

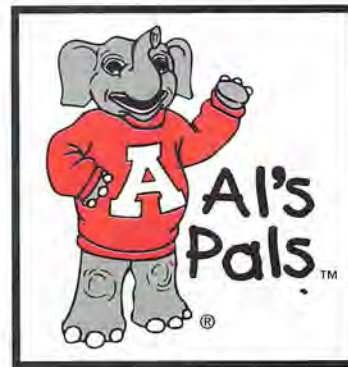
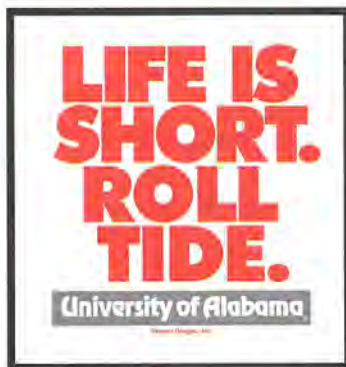
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Roberto Vaz:

Trying To Help Tide To World Series

by John Barnes

Hard-hitting Brooklyn native ranks among best hitters in Crimson Tide baseball history

Throughout the 105-year history of Alabama baseball, the school has been blessed with a number of great hitters. Be it David Magadan, Joe Vitiello or Dax Norris, there always seems to be one special player who has the unique ability to control his team's offensive fortune. There is a current Tider who may prove to be one of the best of a fine bunch.

Although a newcomer for the Crimson Tide, Roberto Vaz has emerged as his team's top offensive threat. His exploits at the plate are quickly becoming the stuff of legends. Coming off a school record 32-game hitting streak, the junior transfer from Brooklyn, New York has his sights set on bigger things.

"I'm just glad to be here," said Vaz. "This is a great place to go to school and a great place to play baseball. I've seen what this team can accomplish and I'm ready to help take us to the next level."

At 5-8, 185, Vaz' stocky build reminds one of former Minnesota Twins outfielder Kirby Puckett. His bat is reminiscent as well. Batting over .400, Vaz is quickly gaining a reputation around the Southeastern Conference, and with pro scouts, as someone who can hit any pitch at any time to any part of the field.

He is the type of player both coaches and scouts drool over. An excellent overall athlete with an extremely quick bat, Vaz demonstrates a discipline at the plate rarely

seen in players at this level.

"I guess it may sound over-simplified, but I've always been able to hit the ball," said Vaz. "It's something that comes very natural to me. People try to make hitting more complicated than it is. You see the ball, you hit the ball."

Nevertheless, the art of hitting is widely regarded as the most difficult pursuit in sports. Ted Williams believed the eyes were the key to hitting. Vaz agrees. "You can have the quickest bat in the world, but if you don't see the ball, your success will be very limited," he said.

Vaz' development as a hitter began at an early age. Growing up in baseball-crazy Brooklyn, long known for its rabid, knowledgeable baseball fans, he gained a love for the sport at an early age.

Prepping at William Grady High School in the heart of Brooklyn, Vaz was all but unstoppable. During his junior year, Vaz batted an amazing .714 with 10 home runs and 55 runs batted in. Also playing in the prestigious Brooklyn Youth Service League, which produced current major leaguers Shawon Dunston and Manny Ramirez, Vaz led his team to the AAABA National Championship, batting .417 with nine homers and 60 RBI. His off-the-field leadership qualities were demonstrated by serving as the Student Chairman to the Chancellor of New York City Public High Schools.

Strangely, Vaz was not drafted following his stellar prep career. "I felt my stats warranted a look from some organizations," said Vaz. "There were some guys in the city who didn't put up the numbers I did and ended up signing contracts. I'm not saying I would have signed, but it would have been nice to have the opportunity to make that decision."

From Brooklyn, New York, Vaz moved on to Mount Pleasant, Texas, and Northeast Texas Junior College. Needless to say, it was a big change from the concrete and fast-paced lifestyle of New York's largest borough.

"It was a change, no doubt about it," said Vaz. "But I knew I was there to go to school and play baseball." And play he did, leading his team to the 1996 Junior College World Series Championship in the school's first-ever appearance. During the series, Vaz batted .548 with four home runs and 15 RBI. He was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player and received the "Big Stick Award." In addition, he earned a save in the championship game. Entering the game with the bases loaded, Vaz struck out two of the three batters he faced, allowing his team to escape with a 4-3 victory over Meridian Junior College. He finished his sophomore year batting .347 with 13 home runs and 58 RBI.

His freshman season was equally impressive. On the year, Vaz hit .357 with two homers and 20 RBI. He led the team in runs scored with 33 and did not commit an error as a starting outfielder.

Alabama assistant Mitch Gaspard, who recruited Vaz, tells of a player Tide coaches wanted, but were unsure they could get. "It all came about because Roberto's junior college coach (Ty Harrington) is an old friend of mine and called him to our attention," said Gaspard. "I went out there and watched him play. During batting practice, he was as impressive as any junior college hitter I've ever seen. I said to myself 'There's no way we're going to get this guy, he hits the ball as well as some double-A players I've seen.' However, he was not drafted and we got him to sign with us."

Arriving on the scene in Tuscaloosa, Vaz did not disappoint, going 5 for 11 in Bama's first series against Marshall and beginning



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what would eventually be the longest hitting streak in school history.

"Roberto is just that special type of player who comes along very rarely," said Gaspard. "He's a great leader, a good pitcher and an outstanding hitter. We knew going in that we might only have him for one year and that's okay. He's just a great kid and is helping us to be a better team than we thought we would be."

Breaking a record held by Alabama baseball icon David Magadan is something Vaz takes in stride. "I saw him play (Magadan) when he was with the Mets and he's a great hitter. I know he hit over .500 (.565) one year at Alabama and that is incredible. The only comparison I would like to see people make is that I helped my team to the College World Series just like he did."

Although the hitting streak ended against Kentucky, and one shy of the Southeastern Conference record held by LSU's Todd Walker, Vaz seems to have rebounded well, launching a monstrous home in his first at-bat against Southern Miss, Bama's first game following the Kentucky series.

Hitting streaks can be both a blessing and a curse for the player. Both Joe Dimaggio and Pete Rose can attest to the fact that the longer the streak goes, the tougher it is on the player. Fan and media scrutiny can distract even the most level-headed player.

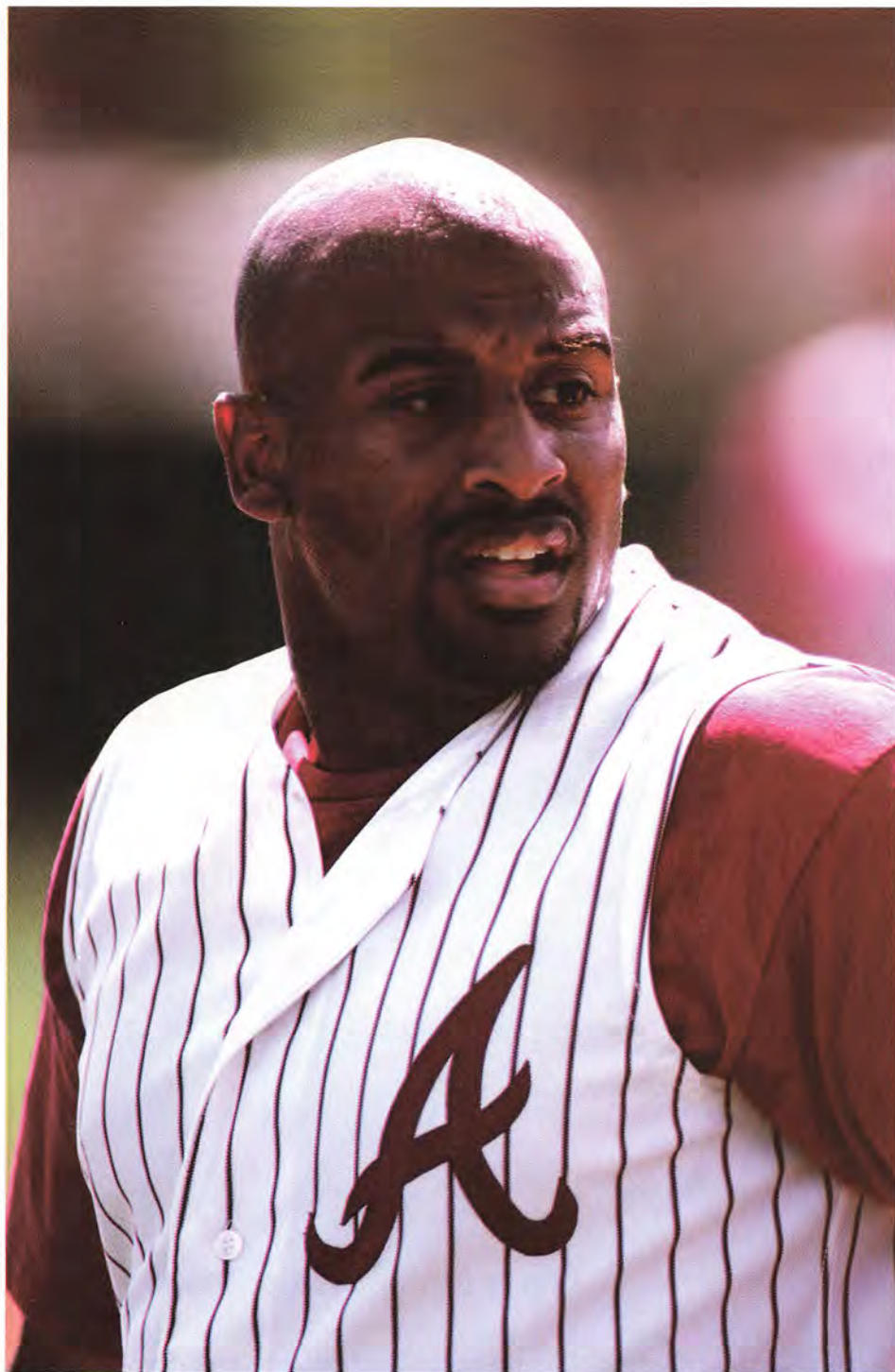
Vaz, however, went about his business and refused to be distracted by the attention. "You may find this hard to believe, but while the hit streak was going on, I never really thought about it," said Vaz. "My one and only goal is to help this team win, period. When the streak ended against Kentucky, I really wasn't that upset that the streak ended. I was very upset that we lost the game."

It is this unselfish attitude and dedication to the team that has made Vaz a favorite among teammates, coaches and fans.

Still, his numbers cannot be ignored. Hovering close to the .450 mark all season, Vaz is no doubt one of the top offensive players in the country. His home run and slugging percentage numbers are turning heads in the baseball world. And unlike many power hitters, Vaz shows excellent speed and base-running ability, which is why he is one of the top hitters of triples. In fact, twice this year Vaz had two triples in the same game.

Not to be overlooked is his ability as a pitcher. Emerging as the Tide's closer, Vaz, while not overpowering, has an excellent command of the strike zone and possesses a wicked curve ball. He has been almost untouchable, had a huge extra innings victory to win the rubber game in Bama's success at Auburn, and is averaging about one and a half strikeouts per inning.

That Auburn series caused the national limelight to shine even brighter on Vaz. He was named National Player of the Week by *Collegiate Baseball*. During the Auburn series, for which he was also named SEC Player of the Week for a second time this



Junior Roberto Vaz has been a star for Alabama's nationally-ranked baseball team. Vaz has been most impressive as a hitter, but he is also an outstanding pitcher, plays left field and first base, and runs the bases well. Barry Fikes Photo

year, he was 8-15 at the plate (.533) with eight runs, three home runs and 12 runs batted in. He had a school record nine RBI in the Tide's 22-7 win over the Tigers in game two. He led off the 11th inning of the third game with a triple and scored the winning run. His slugging percentage in the series was 1.333.

Two-thirds of the way through the season

he had joined Magadan and Joe Caruso as the only players in Alabama history to collect at least 60 runs, hits and runs batted in in the same season.

Whether or not Roberto Vaz returns for his senior season remains to be seen. One thing is for sure: his performance on the field and his personality off the field will have a lasting impression.

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Men's Basketball Adds More

by Kirk McNair

Although much done in fall, and some may be still to come, results are positive

Although much of the work was done last fall, when the Alabama men's basketball team added three signees, Coach David Hobbs and his staff haven't let grass grow under their feet in the spring. That's partly because Bama has more shoes to fill than had been expected, but also because some needs were not met in the fall signing period.

Although most winter and spring sports are continuing to add signees in the spring, the focus is on men's basketball. And that's particularly true this year because Bama had a poor season and because there are many question marks about the 1997-98 Crimson Tide.

Thus far the men's basketball team has added three signees in the spring period to go with three in the early period. Both sets include a point guard, a wing player and an inside player. In the spring, Bama has added junior college

point guard Chauncey Jones, junior college wing player Chris Rollins and freshman inside player Sam Williams.

Bama signed three high school basketball players in the early signing period — inside player Neil Ashby of East Point, Georgia; point guard Tarik London of Savannah, Georgia; and wing player Terrance Martin of Tuscaloosa Central.

Jones, 6-2, 185, is from Chicago and played for Coach Rick Hughes at Wabash Valley Community College in Illinois. The third team junior college All-America was the Region Player of the Year as he averaged 16.4 points, 2.8 rebounds, 4.3 assists and shot 48.6 per cent from the floor and 64.4 per cent from the free throw line. He was rated among the top 25 junior college prospects in the nation and one of the top six junior college point guards by *Basketball Times*.

Wabash Valley finished eighth in the nation with a 30-6 record.

Jones committed to Michigan out of high school, but did not meet academic requirements. He committed to Virginia after completing his junior college career, but did not meet Virginia's entrance requirements (which are higher than the NCAA requirements Jones has met). He then selected Alabama over Kansas, Maryland and Purdue.

Rollins is a 6-4, 195-pound wing guard who played at Southwest Missouri Plains Junior College. He is originally from Winnsboro, Louisiana, where he played for Coach James Remedies and where a decade ago Alabama recruited forward Melvin Cheatum. He was ranked the number five wing guard and among the nation's top 25 junior college players and ranked among the top six small forwards by *Basketball Times*. He was third team All-America and most valuable player in his region as he averaged 16.8 points and 7.9 rebounds per game.

Although a number of schools were connected with Rollins, including Tulane and Oklahoma State, it came down to an unusual twosome, Alabama and Southwest Missouri State, coached by former Indiana star Steve Alford and located in the same city (Springfield) as Plains.

It appeared that Alabama coaches were going to pass on Williams, a 6-8, 230-pound forward for Demopolis. He had announced prior to signing day that he would sign with the College of Charleston. However, when Alabama offered a scholarship just before signing day, Williams jumped on it, said Coach Luke Hallmark. He had also visited Houston and St. Joseph's and was being recruited by Michigan State.

Williams averaged 16.8 points, 9.2 rebounds and 1.9 blocked shots per game in earning all-state honors as a senior.

It has been confirmed that none of the three players Hobbs suspended mid-way through this season will return. They were upcoming seniors George Brown and Ricky Poole and upcoming junior Anton Reese.

Alabama is considered the leader for one of the nation's top junior college players, 7-0, 230-pound center Francisco Elson, a native of The Netherlands who is playing at Kilgore Junior College in Texas. While there were reports that Alabama had placed Elson at Kilgore and while almost every school involved with him said that Bama was the leader, that didn't stop the suitors for a player that was ranked in some publications as the number one junior college center in the nation.

Elson was reported to have said that he was going to make all his visits and then sign with Alabama in early May, but it must be remembered that reports last fall were that he was going to sign with the Crimson Tide in the early signing period. Last fall Cincinnati was the only school other than Alabama to get involved with Elson. This spring he was recruited by national champion Arizona, Cal, Michigan State and Oklahoma State. It was expected that he would sign in early May. The spring signing period ends May 15.

Elson averaged 18 points, 13 rebounds and 2.5 blocked shots per game. He hit 56 per cent of his field goals and 69 per cent of his free throws. He had a high game of 33 points against Paris Junior College. He played for

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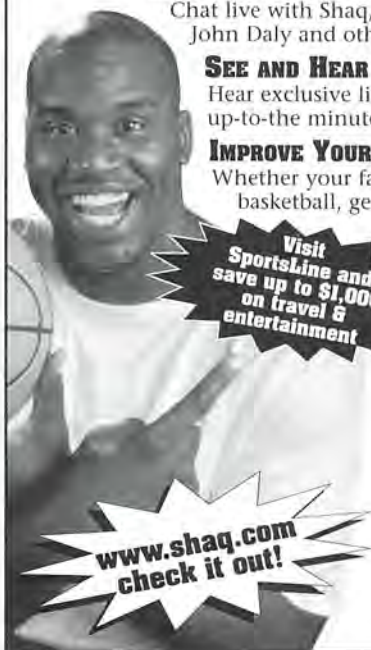
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Scott Schumacher and was all-region and selected for the Texas all-star game. The coach said that Alabama is very high on Elson in part because he is very fast.

While Bama may be considered the leader for Elson, one can understand Hobbs not being ready to breathe a sigh of relief. That's because Ugo Udezue, a 6-8, 230-pound Nigerian who was a power forward at Riverdale Baptist High School in Baltimore, Maryland, committed earlier this spring to sign with Alabama. He said he had picked Bama over Clemson after also being recruited by Maryland, Georgetown and Indiana. So where is Ugo? Can you say Wyoming? It seems that the assistant coach at Clemson who had been recruiting Udezue got the head job at Wyoming, offered a job to a key person in Udezue's life, and also got Udezue's signature.

Bama may also still be in contention for the signature of 6-7 power forward Oral Roberts of Bossier Parish Junior College in Louisiana. Although there were reports that Roberts planned to sign with Mississippi State, that signing did not take place when expected, and the Bulldogs may be running out of scholarships. Southern Cal had been the other leading candidate for Roberts, and when John Brady got the head job at LSU the Bengal Tigers also got into contention.

It is possible, too, that Alabama is still involved with 6-11 center Jabari Smith of Atlanta Metropolitan Junior College, although reports from Atlanta were that Smith was considering making himself eligible for the NBA draft.

There is also the possibility (albeit remote) that the Tide has an interest in Doug Gottlieb, the former Notre Dame point guard who is finishing up junior college work, but not playing junior college basketball. He will have three years of eligibility beginning next season.

One other name being talked is that of Cedrick Carter, a 6-7 forward at Lon Morris Junior College in Texas, who is reportedly also considering LSU.

On the women's side, Coach Rick Moody has added a 6-1 forward/center from Meridian (Mississippi) High School. Joni Crenshaw is a *Street&Smith* and *USA Today* All-America as she has led her team to back-to-back 30-win seasons and one state championship. She was also a state champion in the 100- and 200-meter dashes and a gymnast. She was class president as a sophomore, junior and senior, has a 3.5 grade point average, is sports editor of the school newspaper, was homecoming queen and Miss Meridian High School, and worked in a kitchen for the homeless during Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. She is the cousin of Tiffany Travis, who plays at Florida, and Latoya Graham, who plays at Mississippi State.

Bama had signed the top player in Alabama, Yalika Barnes of Montgomery Carver, in the early signing period.

Coach Jim Wells has picked up a couple of pitchers for the Crimson Tide baseball team this spring. Both are finishing up high school careers.

Jonathan Blankenship is a 5-11, 172-pound

pitcher for Coach William Booth at Hartselle High School. As a junior he was 9-5 with two of his losses coming at the hands of state champion Vestavia Hills. Blankenship got a rematch with Vestavia Hills at Vestavia this year and turned in a 3-1 win, striking out 13 and allowing just four hits. He is 10-0 on the season with a 0.99 earned run average and 114 strikeouts in 56 innings.

Jason Moates is a 6-2, 195-pound pitcher for Coach Tony Long at Columbia (Tennessee) Central. In addition to an outstanding prep record, he is one of the leading American Legion players in Tennessee. He was also se-

lected Mr. Central High School.

Swimming has added a former Olympic Trials finalist from Canada to the Crimson Tide men's team of Coach Chuck Horton.

J.P. Richard of Pierrefords in Quebec is a graduate of Pierrefords Comprehensive School and a member of the Quebec Senior Team for Coach Marc Peaudry. He has been club team most valuable performer three times and was also his high school team's top swimmer. He is a freestyler, backstroker and will compete in the individual medley.

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Talented Group Nears The End

by Donna Fromme

Spybey has enjoyed play, even though sometimes he has been on roller coaster

Three are United States Amateur participants. The fourth has a trophy collection that takes several shelves and includes national championship hardware from one of the world's most famous golf courses, the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland. Together they make for a powerful lineup, filling four of the five spaces on Coach Dick Spybey's Alabama golf roster. They are the senior class of 1997.

"We have been here so long with each other," said All-Southeastern Conference player Chip Deason of his fellow seniors, Allan MacDonald, Mayson Petty and Patrick Vadden. "I've been here four years, Mayson and Patrick have been here five years. Allan's the only one who hasn't because he was a transfer. He's been here two years, but he made it into the lineup right away, so it seems he's been here longer."

"I guess by the time we got to our senior year, we expected to play real well together, and we have at times. We're a really close knit group. It's been an up-and-down season, but we're hoping that it will end on an up note in the post-season. Patrick and Mayson have played on some teams that won tournaments here before, but The Nelson at Stanford in November was the first tournament that I've played in that we won as a team. It was a pretty cool feeling. It was something we definitely wanted to repeat. It's a goal we seniors would like to reach as we play our last rounds at Alabama."

During the quartet's tenure, Alabama has won four tournament championships and

placed among the top five in another 15 tournaments. Three of those top five finishes, including a championship, have come this season. Playing among a field of 17 teams in a tournament hosted by Tiger Woods' Stanford University, Alabama won the Nelson on November 10.

Going into the NCAA post-season which begins with an East Regional appearance in Hot Springs, Virginia, May 15-17, Alabama's seniors have accounted for 33 under par rounds and eight under par tournament finishes this season. And, speaking of post-season play, they have helped maintain Alabama's status as a national power. Their 1997 NCAA appearance will mark the sixth in seven years for the Crimson Tide.

The most successful of the quartet has been Deason. He's saved his best golf for last. All season he has been ranked among the top five in the Southeastern Conference in low stroke average, a feat noted by the league's coaches who voted him All-SEC for the second straight year.

Perhaps wanting a little too much to win the SEC's individual championship his final time out—he placed second in 1996—the pressure for perfection turned into a nightmare opening round at the 1997 SEC Championships on Auburn's Grand National. The round was haunted by bogeys, so many that the man who was averaging 71.47 going into the championships shot 86, fourteen over par. Some may have folded at that point. Deason came back swinging. In the final round, he shot 64, tying the SEC record, and setting both the Alabama school record and the Grand National course record. He made an 8-foot-putt for par on 18 to finish the round at eight under.

"I wanted to win a college event," admits the two-time U.S. Amateur participant. "Hopefully, I'll have two more chances at that in the NCAA post-season. Shooting 64 and getting the school record was very exciting for me. Maybe I can take that into the post-season and continue with that kind of play."

Record rounds are no stranger to Deason. After all, it was his own record, though shared, that he broke. In 1982, Steve Lowery, now a successful PGA Tour golfer, set Alabama's standard with the school's best round ever, a 65. Deason tied it in the second round of the Gator Intercollegiate in 1995, then tied it again at that same tournament in 1996.

"It's been kind of neat to know it was Steve Lowery who I held the record with since he's on the tour and has had a successful career. I was so far out of contention going into the last day. I woke up that morning thinking, 'maybe I can go out and shoot the course record or something.' Then things just suddenly began going my way out there. I started making my putts. And before you knew it, I'd shot 64. It was the most exciting round of golf I've ever played. I guess everybody dreams about shooting the course record. In a tournament like the SEC, a low score can really help the team out. And it did. We came back and beat Florida by a shot. It was the first time a team I'd ever been on had beaten Florida."

Spybey signed Vadden and Petty early, during the November signing period, when they were seniors in high school. Their signings were a major coup for Alabama, giving it one of the strongest incoming freshman classes in the country. Vadden, a Louisville, Kentucky, native, was the 1992 national Rolex Tournament of Champions medalist, winning the tournament at nine-under par. He was also the fourth-ranked junior golfer in the country.

Vadden played at Alabama as a true freshman. His first collegiate tournament found him in Japan where the Tide was competing in the USA/Japan Friendship Tournament. Vadden finished fourth, shooting rounds of 68-72-74/214. He collected three top 10 finishes as a true freshman.

"I think our team is a prime example of how much better the competition has gotten over the five years I've been here," said



Chip Deason



Allan MacDonald



Mayson Petty



Patrick Vadden

Vadden, a 1997 second team All-SEC selection who took a redshirt year in 1993-94. "Our averages as a team are so much better now than they were just a couple of years ago. We had four guys in the top 16 in the conference in low stroke average this year. I think the team stroke average is also a couple of strokes lower than any other team I've played on since I've been here, too. But yet, everyone else is playing better, too. Even though our averages are better, we haven't moved up from where we were four years ago. That's because the other teams are also experiencing that same increase in talent."

The experience of playing collegiate golf at Alabama has been an enjoyable one for Vadden. And, because Alabama is a national power in golf, it has allowed him to play alongside guys who will become some of the greatest names in professional golf, including Tiger Woods who played for Stanford before turning pro this past fall.

"As more and more guys make it who you played with in college, it'll be fun to tell the stories of how you used to hang out with them and how you knew them real well," said Vadden who, like Deason, has finished under par in four tournaments this year. "At the time, you never know if they'll make it, and yet they do. I've already seen it happen. That's one of the fun things about playing college golf. There are a lot of guys out there who you know will make it. And there are others who you'd never guess right now will stroke out and make it later on. It's neat because a year or two from now, you are going to see a guy who you were playing with in your threesome in that last round of a tournament playing on TV. That's a fun concept. I hope that one day I, too, will be one of those guys on TV. Knowing guys who have made it helps you believe your dream can come true, too."

Vadden will finish his degree then start his career.

"That's something I promised my parents I would do, graduate first and get my degree first," said the 1994 U.S. Amateur participant. "The average age of a tour rookie is about 29 or 30, so I've realized the averages aren't in my favor to be an instant success this young. So I'll just wait and take my turn when it comes."

Petty came from The University's backyard. He's a Tuscaloosa native whose father is a professor. Petty, the Alabama Private School Champion, was also on the "Wish List" of several collegiate coaches as the champion of the 1990 Future Masters National Junior Championships and that event's national runner-up in 1991. Petty tied with Vadden for fifth at the 1992 Future Masters.

He, too, was an early success story for Alabama collecting a sixth place finish at the Dixie Intercollegiate as a true freshman. In 1995, Petty took a trip to the U.S. Amateur as a golfer among its elite field. He took a red-shirt year off last season, but has been a part

of Alabama's playing five the other four seasons. He's had two top 20 finishes as a senior, including an 11th place finish at Stanford.

Spybey said, "Mayson displays great physical ability. He has that uncanny ability to shoot a low score or make that great shot or a dramatic putt at any time. I'm tickled that he has continued to improve each year and will finish his senior year on a high note."

MacDonald, a native of Scotland, is the only one who didn't get the chance to play for the Tide all four years of his eligibility but he will be the only one who can brag that both years he played, 1996 and 1997, Alabama advanced to post-season play. His strike, too, was relatively quick and will leave a mark. He was voted second team All-SEC in 1996. And, within seven days time in late April, he was first named the University of Alabama's Male Paul Bryant Award Winner as its top student-athlete then named to play for Great Britain's team at the inaugural Palmer Cup in July. That event is college golf's equivalent to the Ryder Cup or the Walker Cup. Eight of the best collegiate golfers from the United States will play against eight of the best Great Britain and Ireland have to offer. Each year, the event will alternate. It starts out in Orlando. Next summer it will be played in Scotland at St. Andrews.

"The unfortunate thing for me about Allan is that he didn't get a chance to be with us for four years," said Spybey, the manager of the United States' Palmer Cup team. "He is certainly a true student-athlete as is evident by his winning the Paul Bryant Student Athlete Award. I feel like if he could have had four years with us, he could have had the luxury of spending the first couple of years adjusting to everything we do here, and he could have reached even greater heights in two additional years. But he's done more in two years than many do in four."

It is a senior class that Spybey will miss in more ways than one, the depletion of his lineup.

"This group of four certainly ranks right up there with my finest groups ever. They display the greatest physical talent of any group I've ever had. If they had a weakness, it was that they knew that they were physically talented and at times set their goals a little too high. Therefore, they've been a bit inconsistent over the years. But nonetheless, they've helped build this program and solidified us as one of the top 25 or 30 in the country each year and a program that is certainly respected by their peers. It's a group that has sent me on a roller coaster of emotions, but overall, I'll always remember their charisma and their talent."

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Birmingham Balloon Bursts

Athletics Director Bob Bockrath has met with numerous groups of alumni and fans in the past few months, and a primary question from them has been: When are Alabama games with Auburn and Tennessee going to be played in Tuscaloosa?

Bryant-Denny Stadium will be ready for games of that magnitude beginning with the 1998 season, but because of a contract (that Bockrath had nothing to do with), Alabama is committed to playing three games per year (including the Tennessee and Auburn games when they are Bama home games) in Birmingham's Legion Field through 2001.

Bockrath investigated the possibility of bringing the 1998 Auburn game and the 1999 and 2001 Tennessee games to Tuscaloosa, but the price would have been too high to suit most Bama followers and the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce (representing government bodies that contributed \$4.5 million to the current expansion). Alabama would then have committed to one or two games per year in Birmingham through 2009. That proposal is now dead and unless Birmingham has something very attractive to offer (unlikely considering that city's commitment to Alabama-Birmingham football), Alabama will continue with three or four games per year in Tuscaloosa and three in Birmingham through 2001, then move no fewer than six games per year to Bryant-Denny Stadium. After that, in years in which Alabama has seven home games (ordinarily about every other year in the next decade), it would be possible (but not necessary) for Bama to play one game in Legion Field.

Stallings Recovering

Former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings suffered a serious injury when he was trampled by horses he was trying to feed on his ranch at Paris, Texas, April 20. Stallings had been in Tuscaloosa the two days prior to the accident as former associates paid tribute to him with a banquet and for him to participate in Walk of Fame ceremonies prior to the A-Day Game.

Stallings, 62, suffered a broken hip that required extensive surgery. He will be off his feet for several months as he rehabilitates. He was hospitalized for nearly a week.

The Draft

One can't help but wonder what Dwayne Rudd might have done if he had known before the National Football League draft that he would not be picked until number 20. While any first round draft choice is going to make a comfortable salary, the late selection will cost Rudd substantial bonus money. Rudd elected to forego his senior year at Alabama to take advantage of the draft. He had been projected as a top ten pick, but did not go until fairly late when he was selected by Minnesota. He had also been projected as the top linebacker prospect, but was the third chosen.

Former Tide tight end Patrick Hape was selected in the fifth round by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, while Ralph Staten, an all-star linebacker for Bama, will try to make the Baltimore Ravens as a safety after being picked in the third round.

At least three seniors from Alabama's 1996 team signed as free agents, strong safety Kevin Jackson with Arizona, free safety Cedric Samuel with Pittsburgh, and wide receiver Marcell West with Jacksonville.

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Reier Back On Field

Chris Reier, an Alabama football signee from The Bolles School in Jacksonville, Florida, returned to action in April after rehabilitating a broken ankle suffered in the state 4A championship game in December. Reier is participating with The Bolles baseball team as a designated hitter and outfielder. He recently told Brent Beaird, sports writer for The County Line edition of the *Florida Times-Union* that he was ahead of schedule in his rehabilitation. He earned numerous honors as a quarterback and defensive back and is expected to be a cornerback at Alabama.

We're Number 20

Sports Illustrated doesn't cover college athletics like it once did, but the magazine figured out a way to devote 25 pages to colleges in a recent issue. It picked the best jock schools, based on fairly clever criteria. For instance, Iowa ranked 17th because of a story involving a senior football fan who in 1990 didn't know that Iowa's next game, against Miami, was a road game. Some fans, huh? The feature was built in great part around a famous Paul Bryant quote: "It's kind of hard to rally around a math class." The section on Alabama (which ranked 20th) dealt with the Bryant dominance of the landscape (though nothing about his dominance of college football for two and a half decades), flag football and women's basketball and gymnastics. The magazine was proud that it had sent a real "jock" to Tuscaloosa. She was a distance runner at Cornell a few years ago.

Wanted: Cage Assistant(s)

Women's Basketball Coach Rick Moody is definitely looking for one new assistant coach as his top aide, Cheryl Littlejohn, was named head coach at Minnesota. Littlejohn, who had played at Tennessee in the late 1980s, had been an assistant at North Carolina State before joining the Tide program in 1994. She received a five-year contract valued at \$100,000 per year to take over the struggling women's program at Minnesota.

Moody said, "Minnesota needs to be excited about the direction their program is about to take. They are getting one of the very best young recruiters I've had the opportunity to be associated with. There's no question she'll be able to turn that program around. It's a sad day for our program because we hate to lose her." Moody said he would not be in a hurry to name a replacement.

There were also unconfirmed reports that Moody might also lose his number two assistant, former Tide men's player Jeff Lovell.

And Men's Coach David Hobbs may also be making staff changes. There have been reports that either Thad Fitapatrik and/or Bob Marlin might be job-hunting at the end of this recruiting period.

Basketball Awards

Both the men's and women's basketball teams had awards banquets this year. For the men, senior captain Eric Washington received the award as top offensive player, fellow senior captain Thalamus McGhee the award as best defensive player, sophomore wing player Blake Thrasher the hustle award, and freshman center Jeremy Hays the Hayden Riley Scholar-Athlete Award.

At the women's banquet, senior center Yolanda Watkins, who came back after knee surgery, received the Dottie Kelso Most Inspiring Player Award, junior guard Leah Monteith won the Shelly Pyles Hustle Award and the team's academic achievement award.

All-America And Future Pro

Senior Alabama women's power forward Shalonda Enis was named to the 10-player All-America basketball team selected by the United States Basketball Writers Association. The 6-1 Enis, a native of Celeste, Texas, averaged over 20 points per game in her two-year Crimson Tide career and was an All-America both seasons.

She has signed a two-year contract with the American Basketball League and was to join 60 other new signees at a three-day player combine in San Francisco.

Women interested in playing professionally are being forced to decide early whether they want to play in the ABL or for the competing WNBA. Reportedly, players who try out for one league are not welcomed to try out for the other.

One difference in women's professional basketball and men's professional basketball: Players in the women's leagues are not allowed to sign product endorsement contracts unless they have earned their college degrees.

Good Rookie Year

Former women's All-America Niesa Johnson had a fine rookie season with the Atlanta Glory of the ABL. She started 38 of 40 games, averaged 36.9 minutes per game (fifth best in the league), led the ABL in free throw percentage (87.2) and averaged 11.3 points, 6.3 assists and 2.3 steals per game. She had the first triple-double in the history of the league with 18 points, 11 rebounds and 13 assists.

Tiders For USA

Former Alabama star Niesa Johnson and current Bama standout Dominique Canty are among 33 of the nation's best professional and college women's basketball players selected to the USA Women's World Championship Qualifying Team Trials in May in Colorado Springs. The USA team will play in various international tournaments in upcoming months and will provide the pool for the Olympic team. Johnson has previously played for four national teams.

Will Soccer Be Next?

Two days after Alabama's women's basketball season ended, junior Brittney Ezell, the Tide's starting point guard, got a call from Softball Coach Kalum Haack. He wanted Ezell, a highly sought-after softball recruit during her high school days in Franklin, Tennessee, if she would like to join the soft-

ball team. Six days later Ezell was Bama's starting shortstop, becoming Alabama's first two-sport female athlete since Stacey Collins joined the tennis team after her sport, soccer, was disbanded after the 1988 season.

Soccer is back at Alabama now, and Ezell rooms with soccer players. Soccer Coach Don Staley has approached Ezell about becoming Bama's first three-sport athlete by joining the kick-ballers in the fall. She's thinking about it.

Player Of The Week

A year ago there was no Alabama softball team. Now the Tide has a third baseman, Christy Kyle, who has been named SEC Player of the Week twice. Kyle leads Bama in all offensive categories and ranks among the league leaders in batting average and home runs.

End Of An Era

The Meredith Willard era of Alabama gymnastics has ended. While the gymnastics team of Coach Sarah Patterson was unable to defend its national championship in an injury-plagued season, Willard, despite a chronic back ailment, went out in championship style. She, too, was unable to defend her national individual all-around championship, but her second place finish was extraordinary considering the circumstances. The Clemmons, North Carolina, native earned All-America in all four individual routines and in all-around, becoming only the second Tider to earn five All-America citations in one year. Dee Foster did it in 1991. Willard finished with 11 total All-America medals.

Senior Stephanie Woods was runner-up and All-America on uneven bars, while second team All-America honors went to Mandy Chapman, Merritt Booth, and Gwen Spidle.

While Willard's Tide career is over, she will represent the United States in the World University Games in Italy in August.

Bryant Award Winners

Meredith Willard from gymnastics and Allan MacDonald from golf have been named Bryant Award winners for 1996-97. The award is presented by the National Alumni Association to the senior athletes with the highest grade point average for the year. Each men's and women's sport has a nominee.

Cusick Honored

Junior women's golfer Kathryn Cusick, who finished fourth in the SEC Championships and second in SEC scoring for the year to earn All-SEC. Sophomore There's Svedin was honorable mention.

Cusick is one of four America women college players selected to play in US/Japan Matches this summer in Japan. The American women will compete against four Japanese women and eight American college men will compete against eight Japanese college men.

Academic Honors

Five men and three women were selected to the SEC Golf Honor Roll this year. Men honorees are Allan MacDonald, Mayson

Petty, Robert Ireland, Chip Zahn and Michael Jones. Named from the women's team are Johanna Swärd, Julie Pelchar and Linda Sorensen.

Alin Taranga was selected for the men's Tennis Honor Roll.

Divers Lead

Divers provided most of the points for the men's and women's swimming and diving teams at the NCAA Championships.

The women finished 22nd, marking the squad's fifth straight top-25 finish and 14th in the past 16 years. Dana Bleich took fourth in platform diving to earn All-America. Rania Elwani was 10th in 100 freestyle and Ann-Sofie Joensson was 11th in the 1650.

The women finished 23rd, the 25th consecutive year Bama has finished in the top 30. Brent Roberts took third in platform diving, fifth in one-meter and 13th in three-meter to earn two All-America citations in diving. Alabama's 800-meter freestyle relay team of senior Arnar Olafsson and freshmen Donald Morrison, Glen Walshaw and Mark Jollands was 14th.

Sington Honorees

The Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, which treats those with physical disabilities, has its annual Sington Awards banquet at 6 p.m. Monday, May 5, at the Harbert Center in Birmingham. The Awards are named for former Alabama All-America football player Fred Sington, who also played professional baseball before becoming an outstanding business and civic leader in Birmingham. Legendary sportscaster Keith Jackson will be master of ceremonies. Among the honorees, who were selected by the Alabama Sports Writers Association, are gymnast Meredith Willard and Baseball Coach Jim Wells of Alabama.

Tickets are available by calling (205) 868-2303.

Going To Disney Wide World

Two Bama women athletes, Regan Croyle of the basketball squad and Cari Higgins of the soccer team, are among 276 student-athletes who will participate in the 1997 NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference at the Walt Disney Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando, Florida, May 27-30. Athletes will participate in a forum "to explore viable solutions to critical issues facing student-athletes around the country."

Institutions were invited to nominate student-athletes who are leaders in the eyes of their peers, their institutions and their communities. More than 500 athletes from 140 colleges and universities were nominated. The participants represent some 20 NCAA sports.

Press Guide

The 1997 Football Media Guide may be ordered for \$15 (check payable to University of Alabama) by writing Football Media Guide, Athletic Media Relations Office, The University of Alabama, P.O. Box 870391, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. The publication will be mailed in August.

Orders will also be accepted for next year's men's basketball (\$10), gymnastics (\$8) and baseball (\$8) press guides.

1997 Alabama Spring Sports Results

Baseball			Softball			Men's Tennis			Women's Tennis		
Date/ UA	Opponent	Time/ Opp.	Date/ UA	Opponent	Time/ Opp.	Date/ UA	Opponent	Time/ Opp.	Date/ UA	Opponent	Time/ Opp.
8	Marshall	2		@ Oklahoma City Invitational		6	Troy State	1	7	USM	2
17	Marshall	4	5	Tulsa	2	5	Georgia State	2	7	@ Ga. Tech	0
16	Marshall	0	0	Oklahoma	12	4	Southern Miss	3	5	Arkansas	4
9	Louisiana Tech	3	2	Southwest Missouri	3	3	UAB	4	8	UAB	0
13	Louisiana Tech	7	0	Kansas	8	3	@ Fla. Atlantic	4		@ Williamsburg, Va.	
21	Michigan	3				4	@ Miami	3	6	Maryland	3
19	Michigan	3		@ Louisiana Classic		4	Georgia Tech	3	5	William & Mary	4
22	Michigan	7	0	Arizona	13	3	Miss. State	4		National Team Indoor	
	Middle Tennessee		0	SW Louisiana	3	1	Ole Miss	6		@ Madison, Wisc.	
9	Illinois	2	3	Baylor	2	7	Arkansas	0	1	Stanford	7
5	Illinois	3	0	Arizona	9	2	@ Georgia	5	4	Notre Dame	5
6	Illinois	5					Blue-Grey Classic		1	William & Mary	5
11	Duquesne	0	4	Delta State	3		@ Montgomery				
15	Georgia	6	3-2	Michigan	4-5	5	Michigan	2	1	@ Georgia	7
10	Georgia	6		Georgia State Tourney		3	Middle Tennessee	4	5	@ Kentucky	4
6	Georgia	11		@ Atlanta		4	North Carolina	3	3	@ LSU	6
7	Winthrop	2	2	Troy State	0	4	Tulane	3	5	South Carolina	4
9	Winthrop	7	4	Georgia State	2				4	Tennessee	5
6	@ Florida	4 (10 inn.)	11	Bradley	1	3	LSU	4	5	Indiana	2
13	@ Florida	9	6	Mercer	0	5	Auburn	2	3	Vanderbilt	6
4	@ Florida	9	4	LSU	1	5	@ Vanderbilt	2	7	Miss. State	2
11	UAB	2				3	@ Kentucky	4	3	@ South Fla.	6
3	@ Tennessee	2	1-3	@ Arkansas	9-2	7	Tennessee	0	9	@ Fla. Internat.	0
7	@ Tennessee	8	1-7	@ Arkansas	2-1	3	@ Florida	4	6	@ Auburn	1
2	@ Tennessee	9	1-6	@ Samford	5-8		SEC Championships		7	@ Ole Miss	2
19	@ USM	14	2-15	Kentucky	0-0		@ Columbia, S.C.		0	Florida	6
8	Vanderbilt	2	1-3	Tennessee	11-6	5	Vanderbilt	0		SEC Championships	
6	Vanderbilt	3		Georgia Tech Tourney @ Marietta		0	Ole Miss	4	4	@ Athens, Ga.	
14	Vanderbilt	2	4	Wichita State	5					Kentucky	5
9	South Alabama	8	11	Georgia State	2		May 9- NCAA Regional			May 9- NCAA Regionals	
9	@ Middle Tenn.	6	12	No. Carolina A&@	0		May 10 TBA			May 11 @ Nashville	
10	Kentucky	3	0	Utah	5		May 16- NCAA Championships			May 16- NCAA Championships	
2	Kentucky (SS)	9					May 25 @ Los Angeles			May 23 @ Stanford, Calif.	
9	Kentucky	5	0-4	Auburn	1-3						
14	USM	6	9-10	@ Ole Miss	5-6		All times central				
2	UAB @ Hoover	10	5-1	@ Ole Miss	1-0						
8	@ Auburn	13	1-0	Florida	4-2						
22	@ Auburn (SS)	7	3-2	@ Auburn	1-3						
12	@ Auburn 11 (11 inn.)		4-8	Miss. State	2-0						
7	@ South Ala.	8	5-1	@ Miss. State	2-2						
4	@ Samford	2	0-0	@ So. Carolina	2-6						
10	@ Miss. State	11	Apr. 27	@ Georgia	1 p.m.						
7	@ Miss. State	9	Apr. 30	Samford	5 p.m.						
6	@ Miss. State	3	May 1	FSU	4 p.m.						
10-15	West Alabama	9-4	May 3	@ LSU	2 p.m.						
11	Arkansas	10	May 4	@ LSU	12 p.m.						
13	Arkansas	2	May 10- SEC Tournament								
Apr. 27	Arkansas	2 p.m.	May 11	@ Columbus, Ga.							
Apr. 29	Samford	7 p.m.	May 22- College World Series								
May 2	@ Ole Miss	7 p.m.	May 26	@ Oklahoma City							
May 3	@ Ole Miss	2 p.m.									
May 4	@ Ole Miss	2 p.m.	All times central								
May 9	LSU	7 p.m.									
May 10	LSU	2 p.m.									
May 11	LSU	2 p.m.									
May 14- SEC. Tournament											
May 18	@ Columbus, Ga.										
May 22- NCAA Regionals											
May 25	@ campus sites										
May 31- College World Series											
June 7	@ Omaha										
All times central											
(SS) SportsSouth cable tv											
Men's Outdoor Track			Women's Golf			Men's Golf			Women's Track		
Date	Event	Finish	Date	Event	Finish	Date	Event	Finish	Date	Event	Finish
Mar. 15	@ Auburn	n/a	Mar. 1-2	Florida Lady Gator		Feb. 8-9	Florida Invitational		Mar. 15	@ Auburn	n/a
Mar. 20	Alabama Relays	5th		@ Gainesville	10th of 15		@ Gainesville	10th of 15	Mar. 20	Alabama Relays	11th
Apr. 5	@ Clemson	3rd	Mar. 14-16	LSU Fairwood		Feb. 19-21	John Burns		Apr. 5	@ Clemson	8th
Apr. 10-	@ Sea Ray Relays			@ Baton Rouge	4th of 14		@ Honolulu	6th of 27	Apr. 10-	@ Sea Ray Relays	
Apr. 12	@ Knoxville	n/a	Mar. 21-23	South Carolina Inv.		Feb. 28-	Matlock Intercollegiate		Apr. 12	@ Knoxville	n/a
Apr. 20	Crimson Classic	n/a		@ Columbia	9th of 15		@ Lakeland, Fla.	3rd of 18	Apr. 20	Crimson Classic	n/a
Apr. 25	@ Drake Relays	n/a	Apr. 11-13	Women's Southern		Mar. 21-23	Spring Invitational		Apr. 25	@ Drake Relays	n/a
Apr. 25	@ Penn Relays	n/a		@ Athens, Ga.	11th of 19		@ Montgomery	7th of 18	Apr. 25	@ Penn Relays	
May 4	@ Auburn		Apr. 18-20	SEC Championships		Apr. 4-6	Carpet Capital		May 4	@ Auburn	
May 15-	SEC Championships			@ Columbia, S.C.	7th		@ Dalton, Ga.	18th of 18	May 15-	SEC Championships	
May 18	@ Auburn		May 8-10	NCAA Regional		Apr. 11-13	Billy Hitchcock		May 18	@ Auburn	
May 24	@ Georgia Tech			TBA			@ Auburn	3rd of 12	May 24	@ Georgia Tech	
June 4-	NCAA Championships		May 21-24	NCAA Championships		Apr. 18-20	SEC Championships		June 4-	NCAA Championships	
June 7	@ Bloomington, Ind.			@ Columbus, Ohio			@ Auburn	6th	June 7	@ Bloomington, Ind.	
						May 15-17	NCAA Regionals				
							TBA				
						May 28-	NCAA Championships				
						May 31	@ Chicago				

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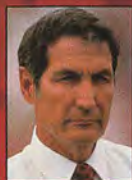
Vol. 17 1986 BAMA VS. NOTRE DAME
Linebacker Cornelius Bennett and the Tide sack the Irish.

Vol. 18 1994 BAMA VS. GEORGIA
Jay Barker leads the Tide victory in a shootout with the Bulldogs.

Vol. 19 1989 BAMA VS. OLE MISS
Gary Hollingsworth leads Bama's comeback in a 62-27 win over the Rebels.

Vol. 20 1977 BAMA VS. U.S.C.
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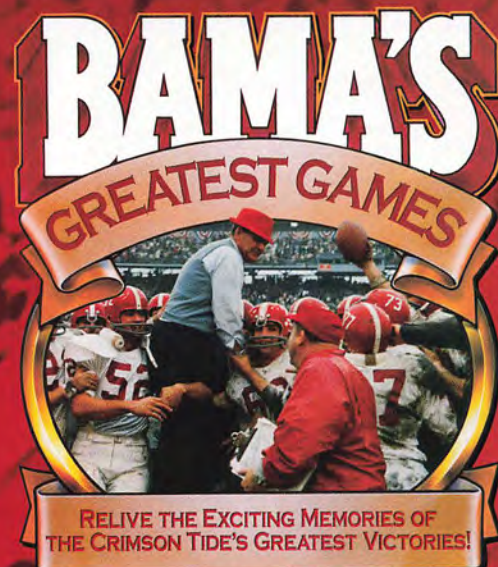
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